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INDIAN STUDIES
PAST & PRESENT

A Quarterly Journal

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VOL. I, NO. 3. APRIL, 1960.

CONTENTS

S. K. DE
Lionel David Barnett

E. T. DALTON
Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal

K. P. CHATTOPADHYAYA
Colonel Dalton and the rise of Anthropological Science in India

052
In 1 I

Edited by Debiprasad Chattopadhyaya

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पुस्तकालय

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पुस्तक संख्या In1I
आगत पञ्जिका संख्या ~~[illegible]~~

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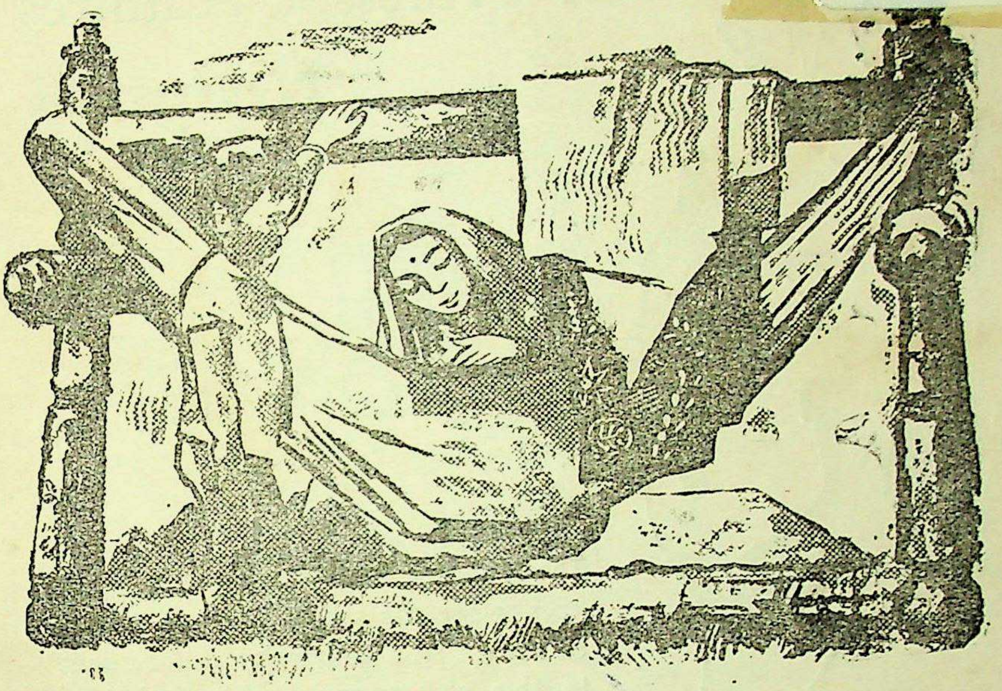

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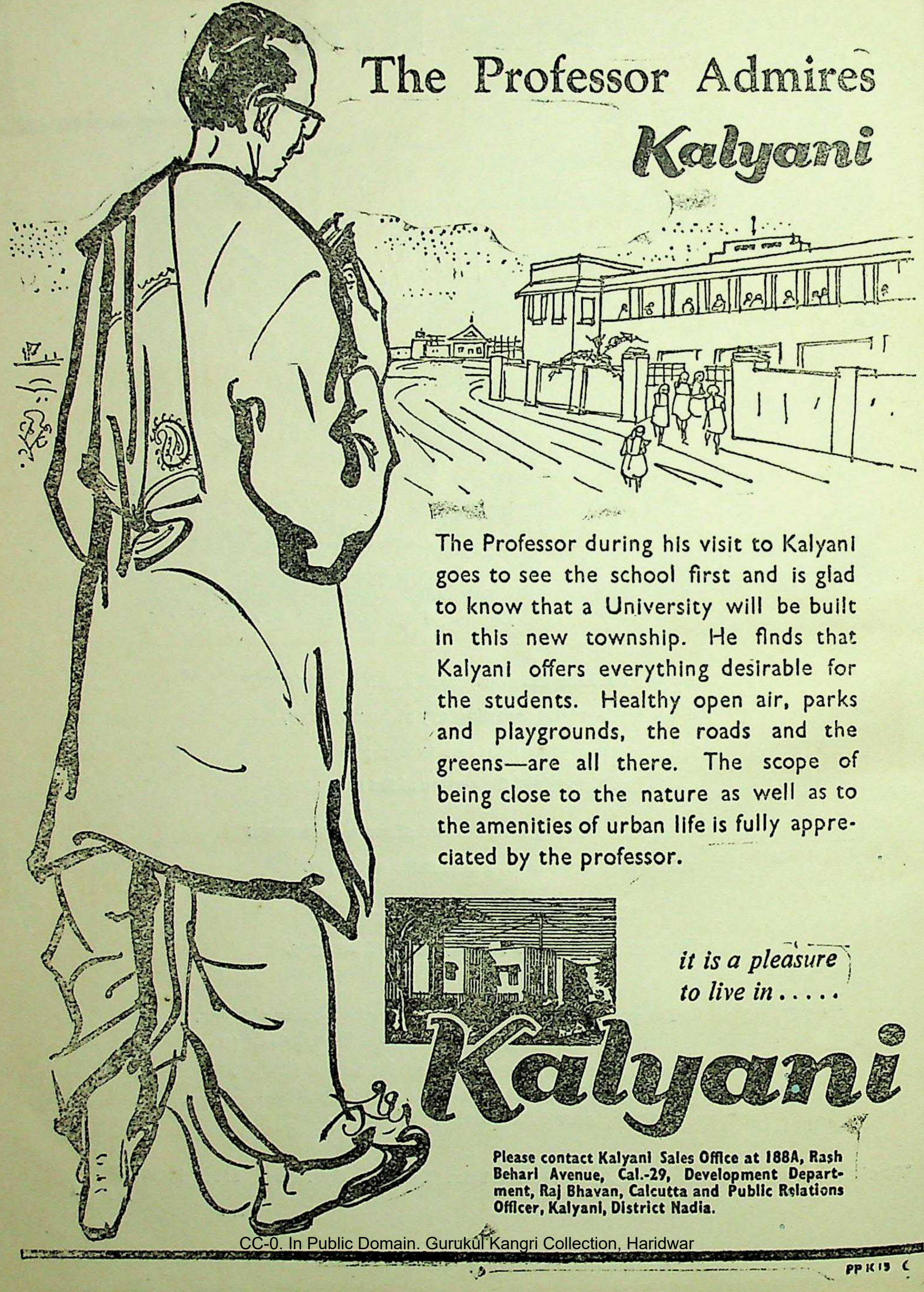

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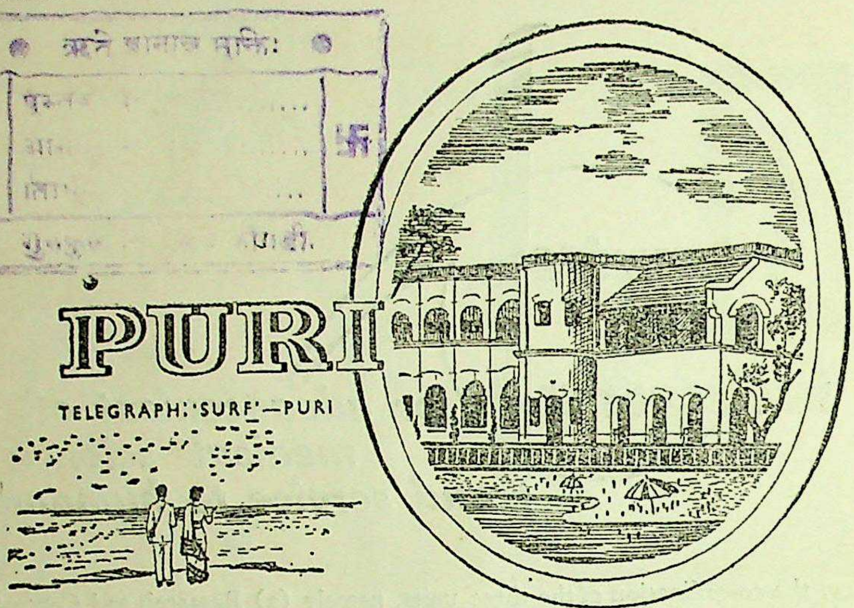

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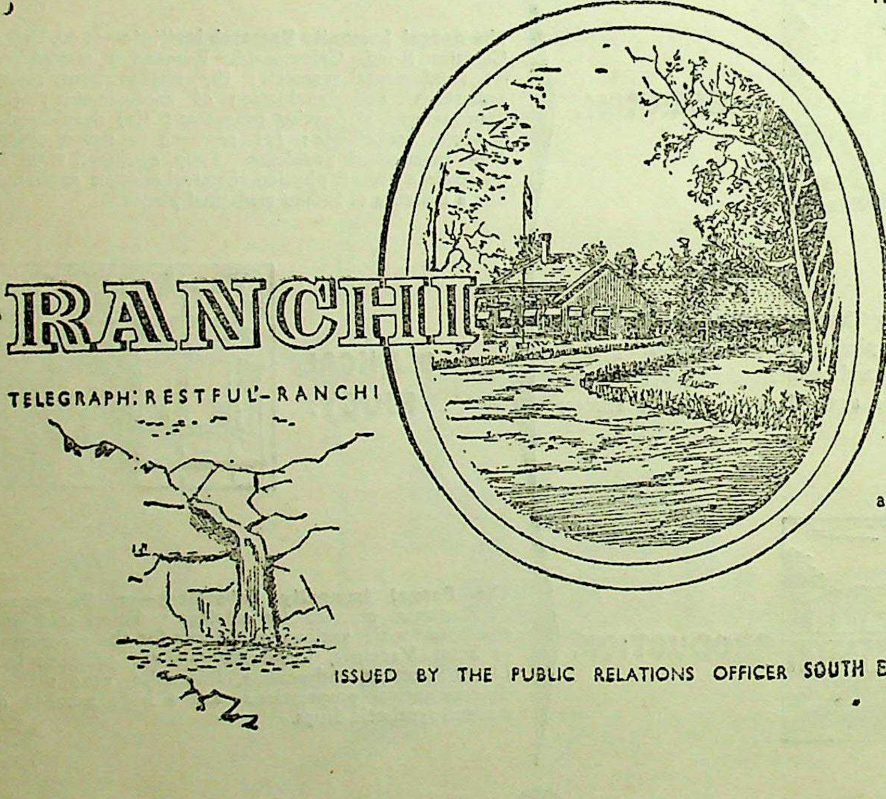

The undulations of the hills along the blue skylines, the wild beauties of Nature at every corner of the valley, the Hundru falls, the charming climate,—Ranchi is famous for these, and no less for the exquisite cuisine and comfort provided by the South Eastern Railway Hotel.

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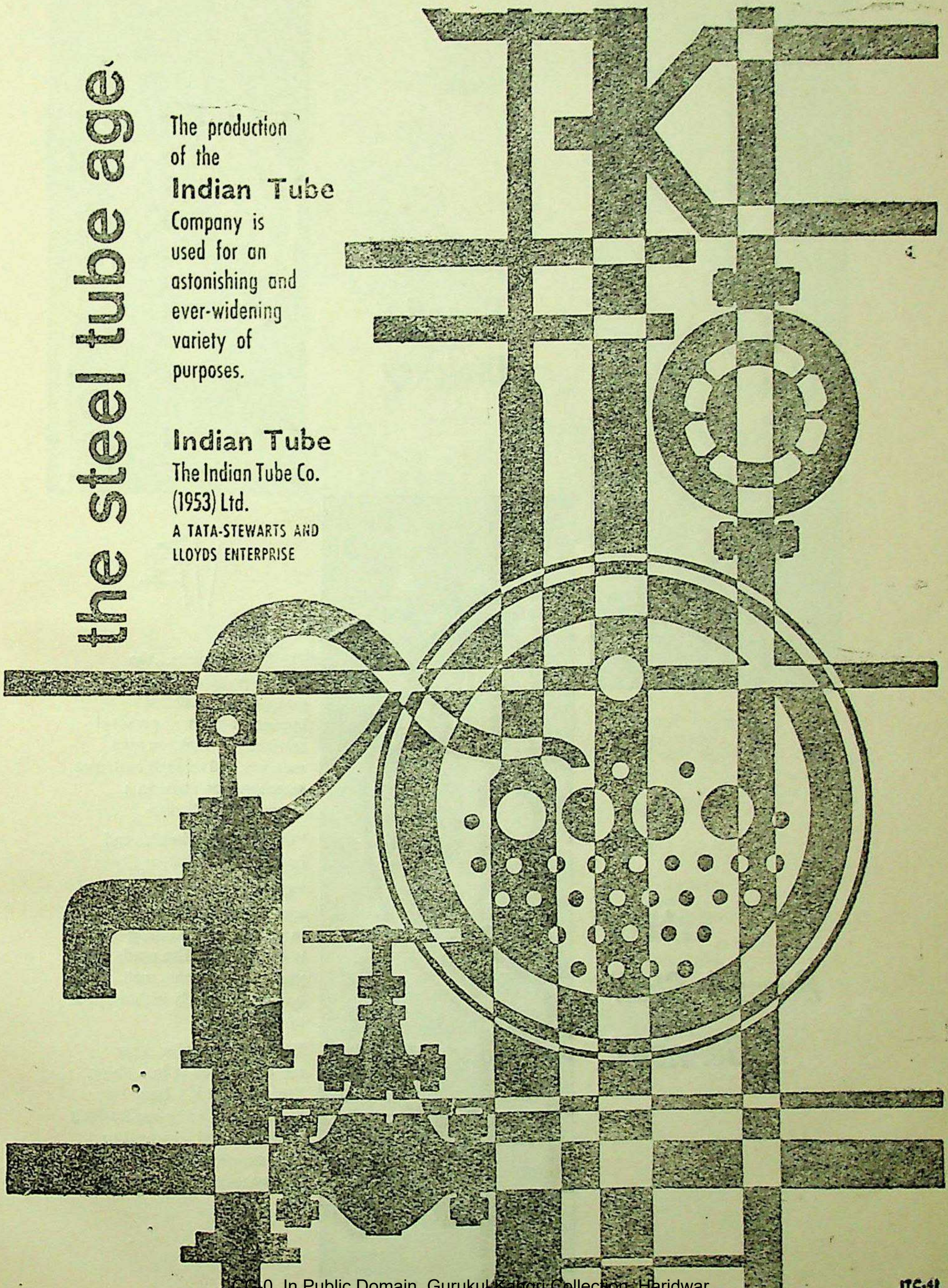

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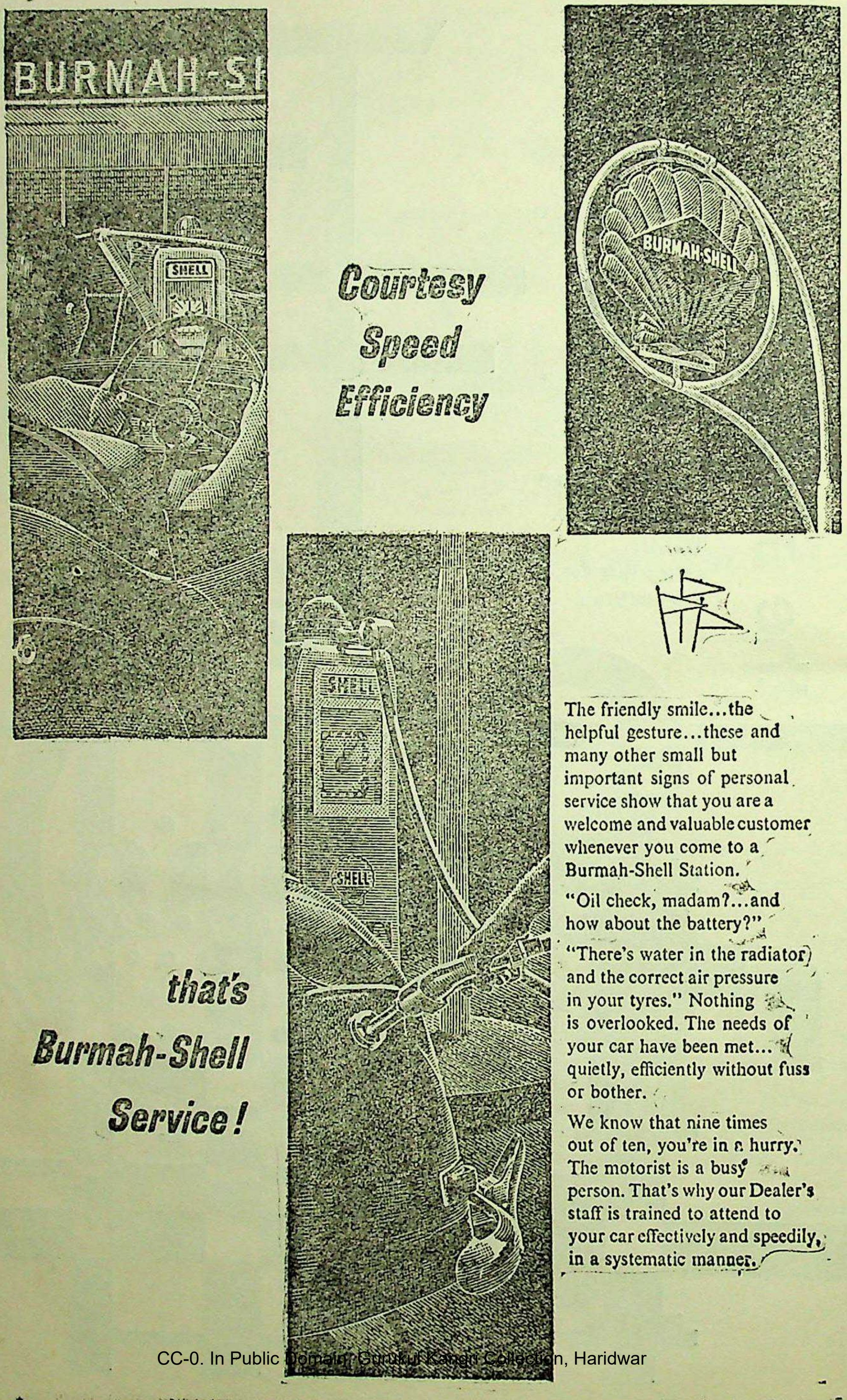

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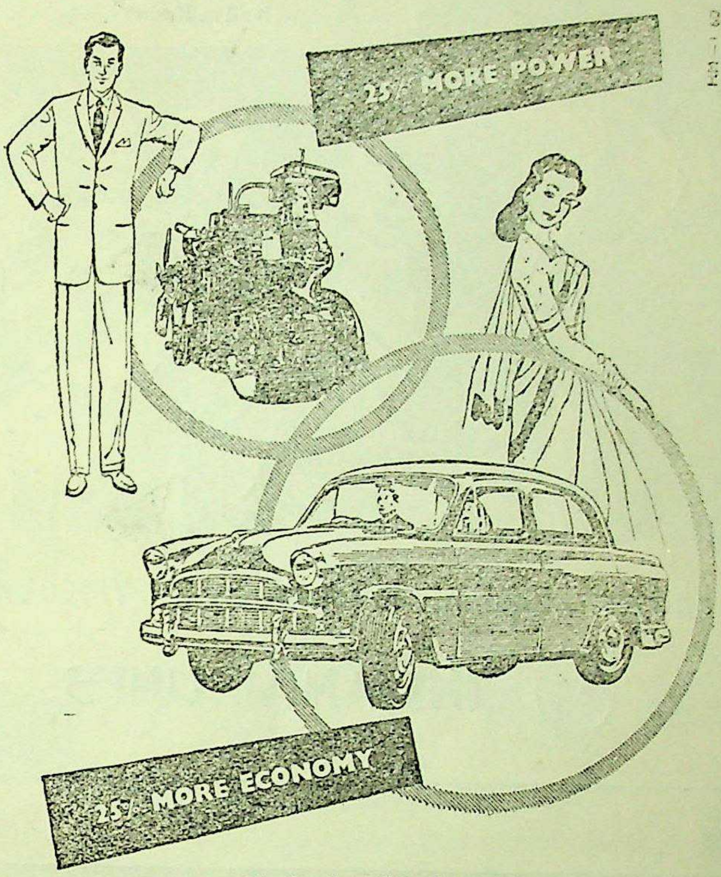

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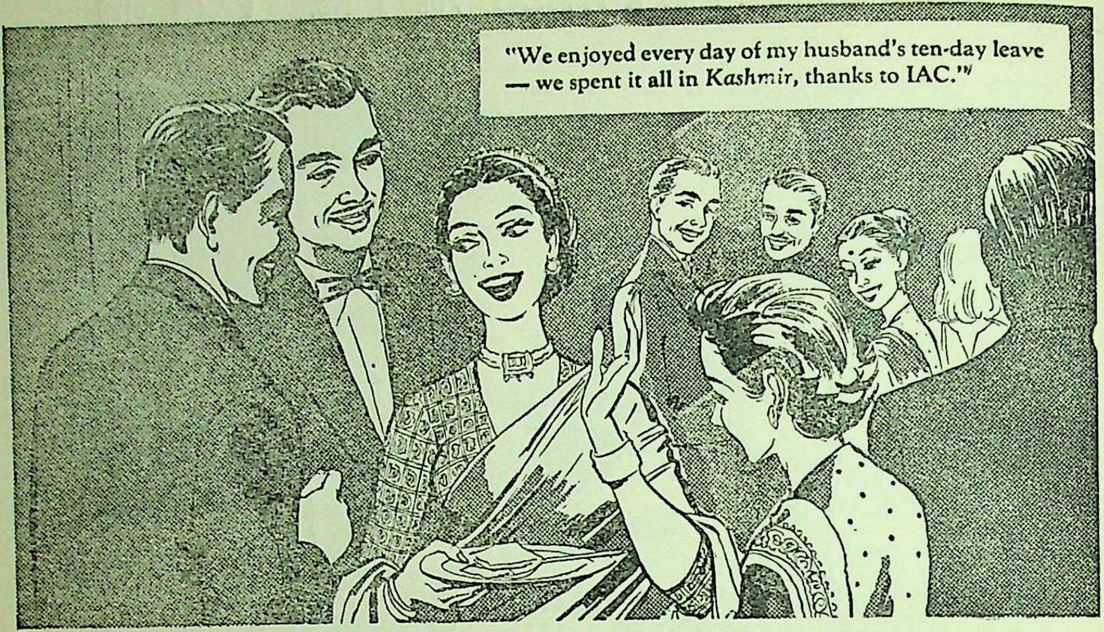

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Criss-crossed by rivers, the rich alluvial soil of Bengal yields crops easily—when Nature is kind. The easy pace of life helped to develop a tradition of folk art, music, and rituals steeped in Nature-cults. In literature and music, painting and the making of images, dolls, textile designs, West Bengal has manifested a rich culture. The spirited toy horses of Bankura and the life-like dolls of Krishnagar are utterly different in style, but equally interesting examples of a living tradition. Here were produced the famous 'Bazaar' paintings of Kalighat and the brass images which are still the delight of collectors.

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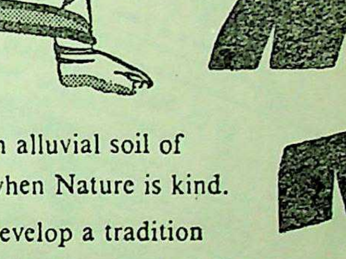

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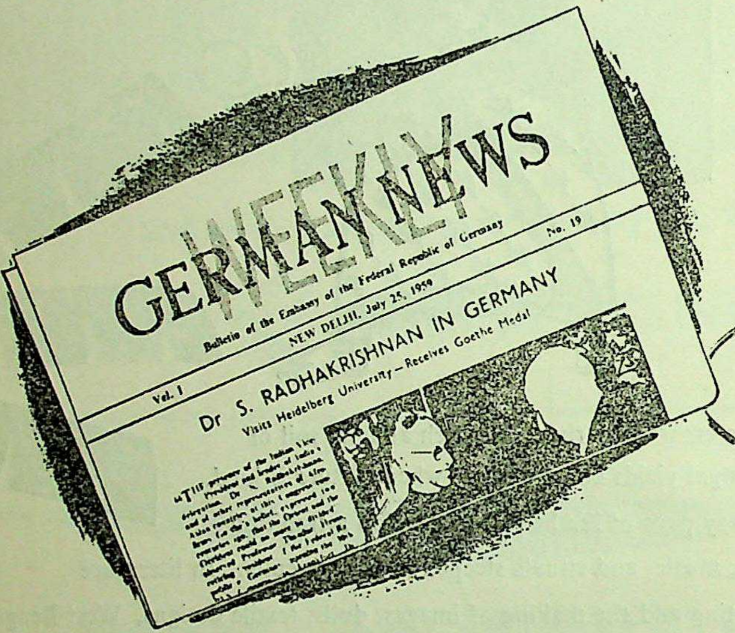

WEEKLY GERMAN NEWS

Bulletin of the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany

No. 19

Vol. I

NEW DELHI, July 25, 1959

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Visits Heidelberg University—Receives Goethe Medal

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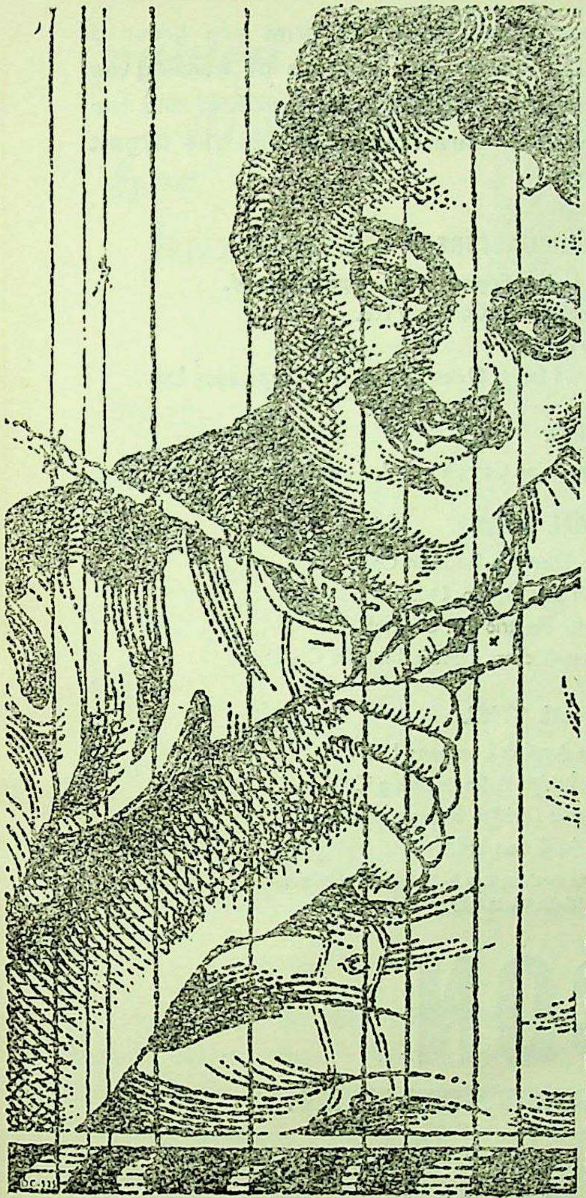

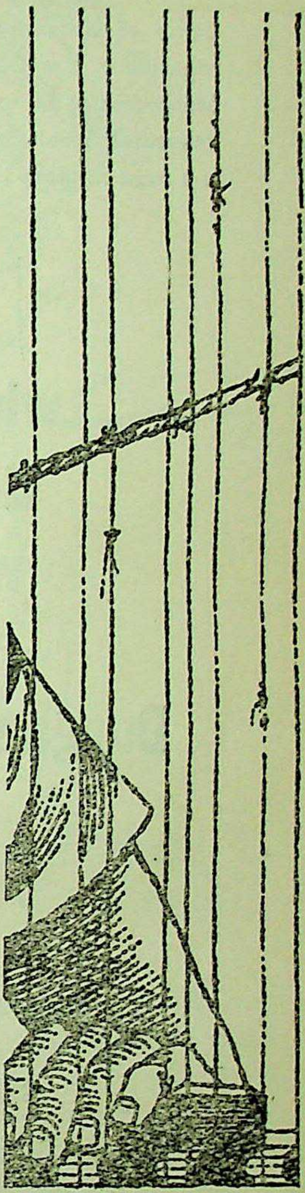

With great skill, interlacing threads of many colours, the weaver transfers the master design to the cloth . . . symbolising, as it were, our many-sided efforts to redesign the fabric of the nation's life.

In this national effort, rubber products are playing an integral part. Tyres, latex foam cushioning and industrial rubber products manufactured by Dunlop, for instance, are helping to transport men and materials, move mountains of earth, build dams and factories, and bring comfort and elegance into the home.

DUNLOP

DC-525

Some of Britain's most famous engineering and electrical firms are grouped together in the Consortium known as ISCON for the purpose of building the Steelworks at Durgapur. Each of these firms is a leader in its own field and the Integrated Steelworks when completed will compare favourably with the largest and most modern in any part of the world.

who is doing what at Durgapur ?

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The Cementation Company Ltd.

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The English Electric Co. Ltd.
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Metropolitan-Vickers Electrical Export Co. Ltd.

STRUCTURAL STEEL

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Cleveland Bridge & Engineering Co. Ltd.
Dorman Long (Bridge & Engineering) Ltd.
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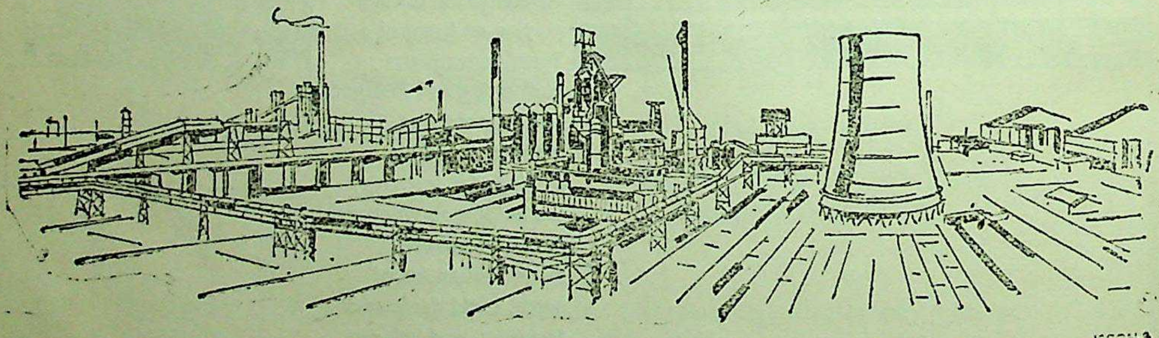

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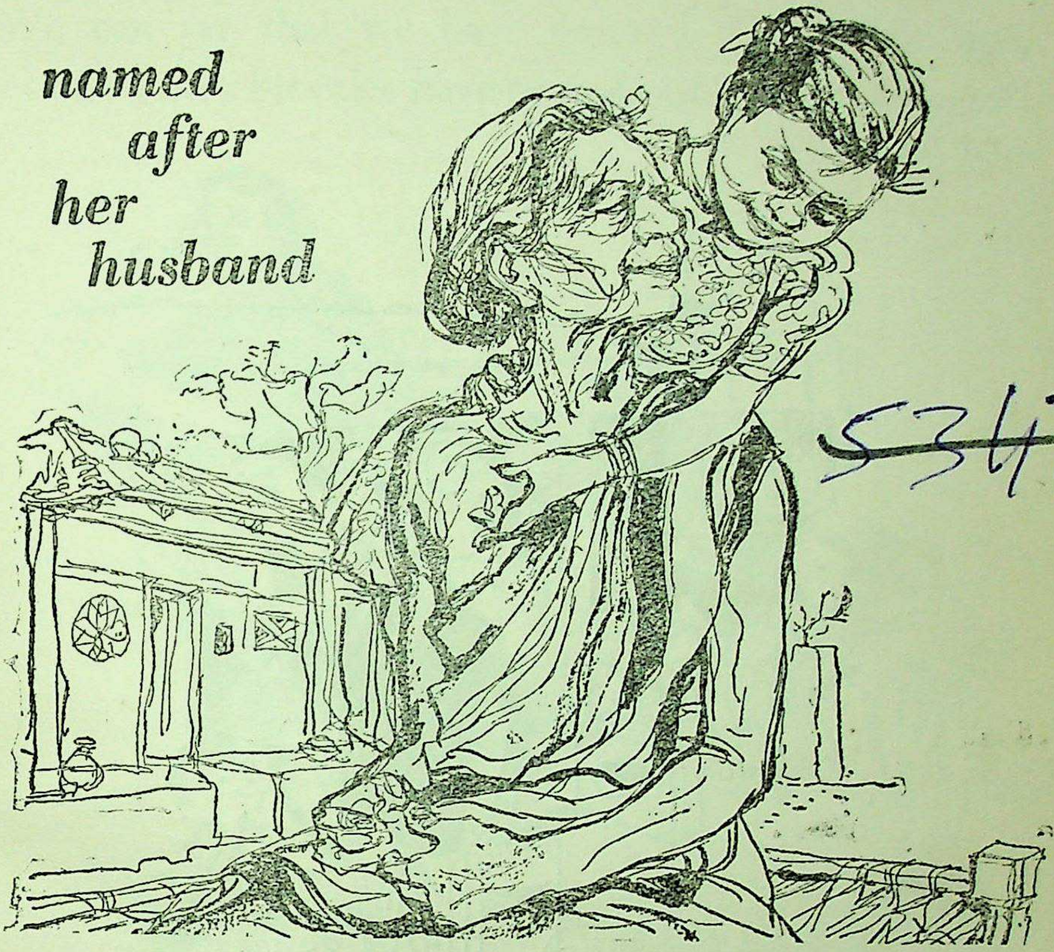

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Last year, 61-year old Lakshmi Hansda retired from the Jamshedpur Steel Works which she and her late husband, Sitaram Hansda, joined as a young Adivasi couple shortly after the first steel ingot was cast in 1912. The family connection with the Steel Works is maintained through two of her three sons who work there.

Lakshmi and her family—sons, daughters and grandchildren—live in the same area in Jamshedpur where she first set up her home on arrival from a Ho village in Seraikella nearly 50 years ago. That once-desolate spot is now a busy, bustling Adivasi community, with clean huts, roads, water supply and a primary school and is named Sitaramdera in memory of Lakshmi's husband.

Like men and women from other parts of India, Adivasis have found a happy home in Jamshedpur, where industry is not merely a source of livelihood but a way of life.

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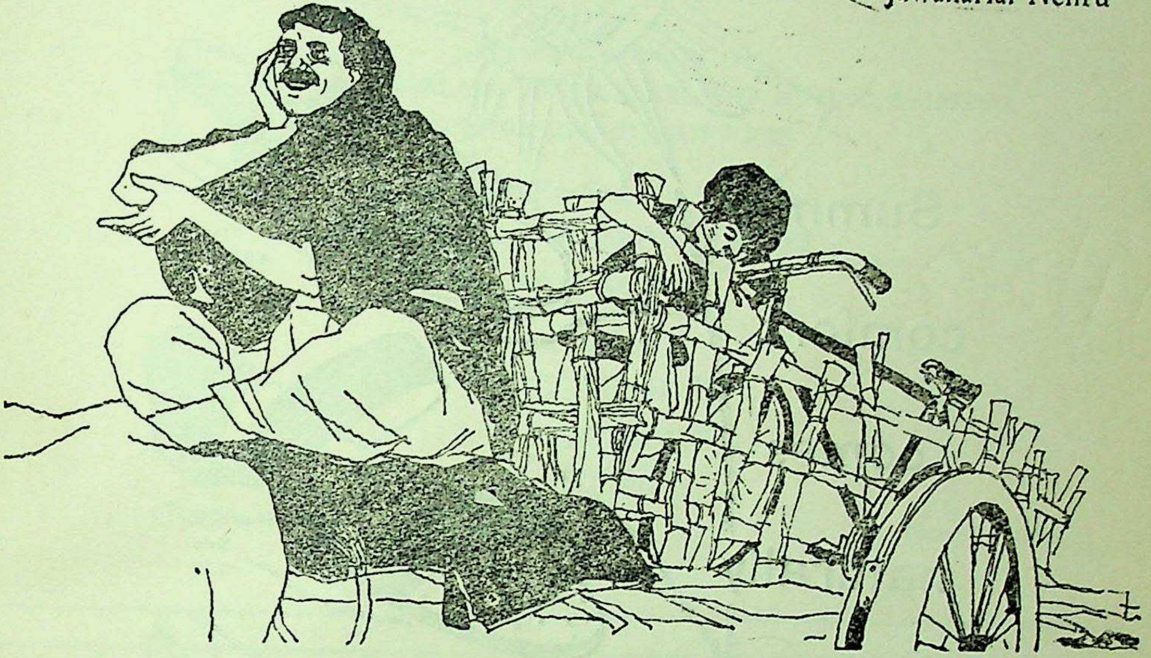
NORTHERN RAILWAY *on behalf of* **INDIAN RAILWAYS**

127

"We can say that we have entered the bicycle age, because today bicycles have spread out into the villages",

—Jawaharlal Nehru



'Of what shall I sing ?
Even our bullock eats like a demon !'

But today it doesn't matter. There is enough good seed stored away for sowing. A warm meal awaits him at home. And—there is a fine new bicycle in his cart, the fulfilment of a long-cherished wish.

After every harvest, a big crop of bicycles moves into every village to replace slower and more primitive means of travel. Their present tremendous popularity is the achievement of organisations like Sen & Pandit Private Ltd., which, since 1910, has specialised in the bicycle trade. The crowning achievement of its founder, the late Sudhir Kumar Sen—the acknowledged father of the Indian bicycle trade and industry—was to bring to India the technique achieved in the bicycle line by such well-known manufacturers as Raleigh, Union, Wittkop and Brooks, a step which took India a long way into the 'bicycle age'.

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INDIAN
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INDIAN STUDIES
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Vol. I April 1960 No. 3

In reprinting the remaining half of Dalton's work, the typographical and other principles followed remain the same as in our previous number.

While having the satisfaction of bringing this reprint to an end, we gratefully acknowledge the kind help of the Asiatic Society, Calcutta, under the direction of the Council of which the work had originally been published in 1872, and without the unreserved cooperation of which the present reprint would have been impossible.

We feel particularly happy to append to it Professor K. P. Chattopadhyay's critical estimate of Dalton in the general background of the development of Indian Anthropology. We are indeed deeply grateful to Professor Chattopadhyaya who, with all the pressure of academic and extra-academic commitments on him, has been kind enough to contribute to our Journal.

We also consider ourselves fortunate to be able to publish the *Obituary Note* on Professor L. D. Barnett, contributed by one of his oldest and most eminent pupil and friend, Professor Dr. Sushil Kumar De.

In going through the press, we have been substantially helped by Shri Asitananda Roy.

E. T. DALTON
Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal
(Pages 151 to 327 and Plates xvii-xxxvii)

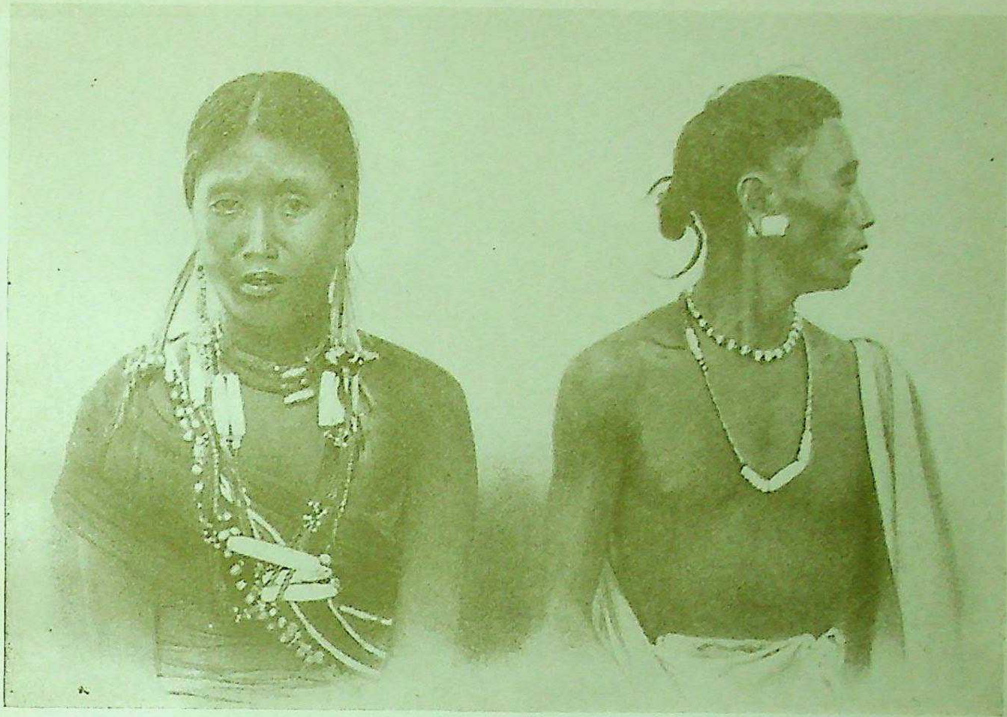

Plate XVII *Male and Female of the Namsang Naga Tribe*

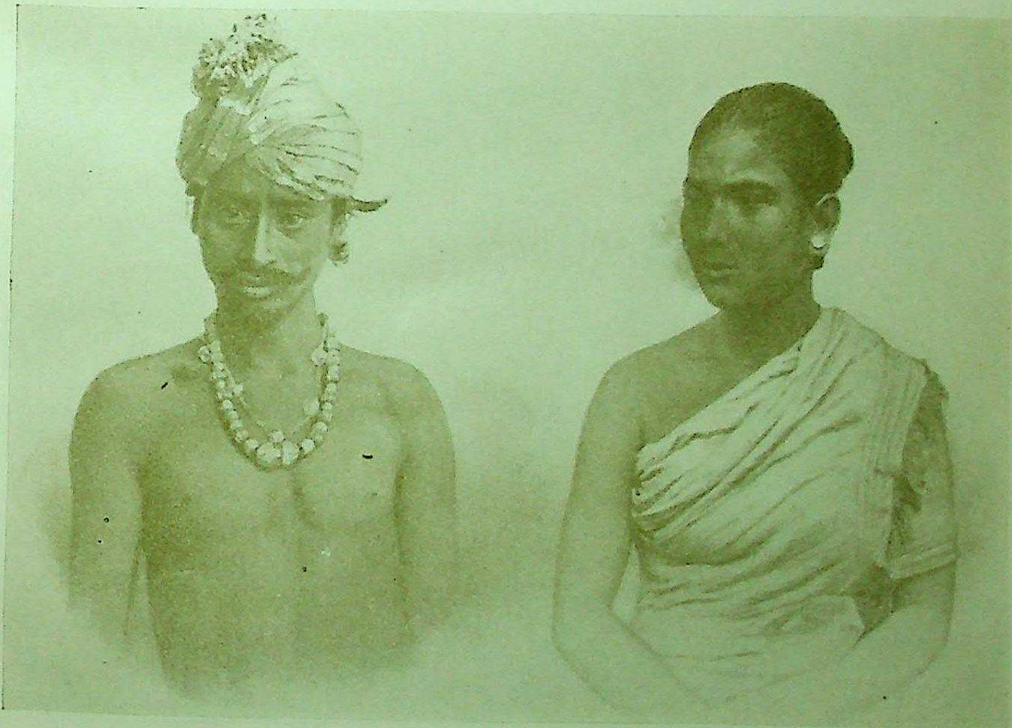

Plate XVII/A *Male and Female from Muttuck, Asam*

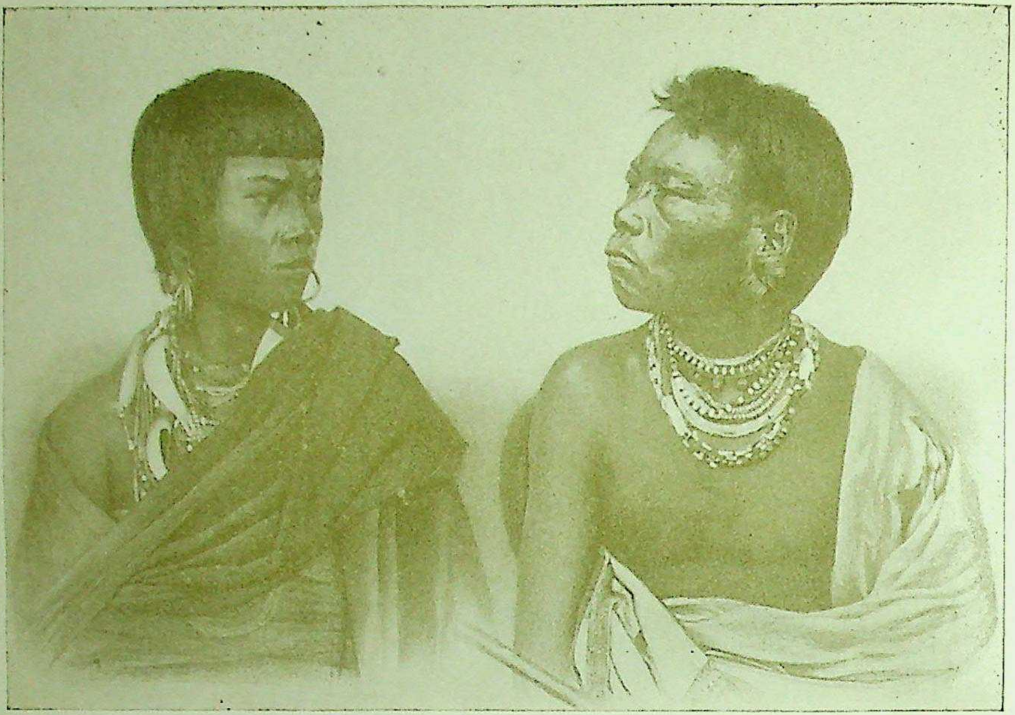

Plate XVIII *Male and Female of the Lower Naga Group*

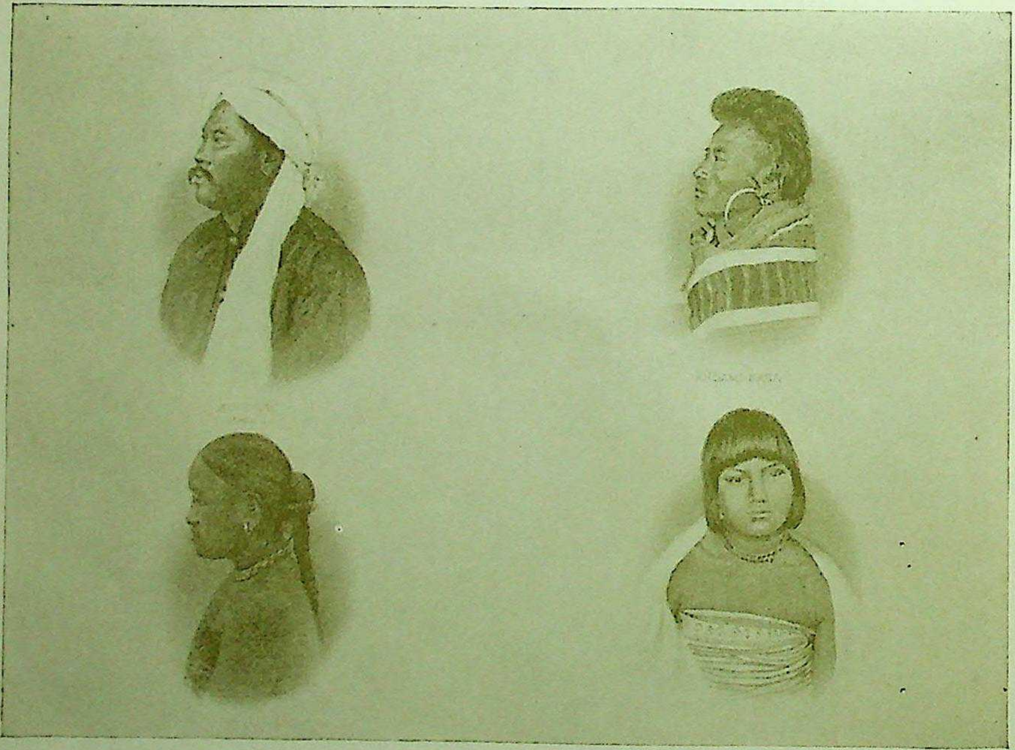

Plate XIX *Figs. 1-3 Natives of the Manipur Valley. Fig. 4 Angami Naga*

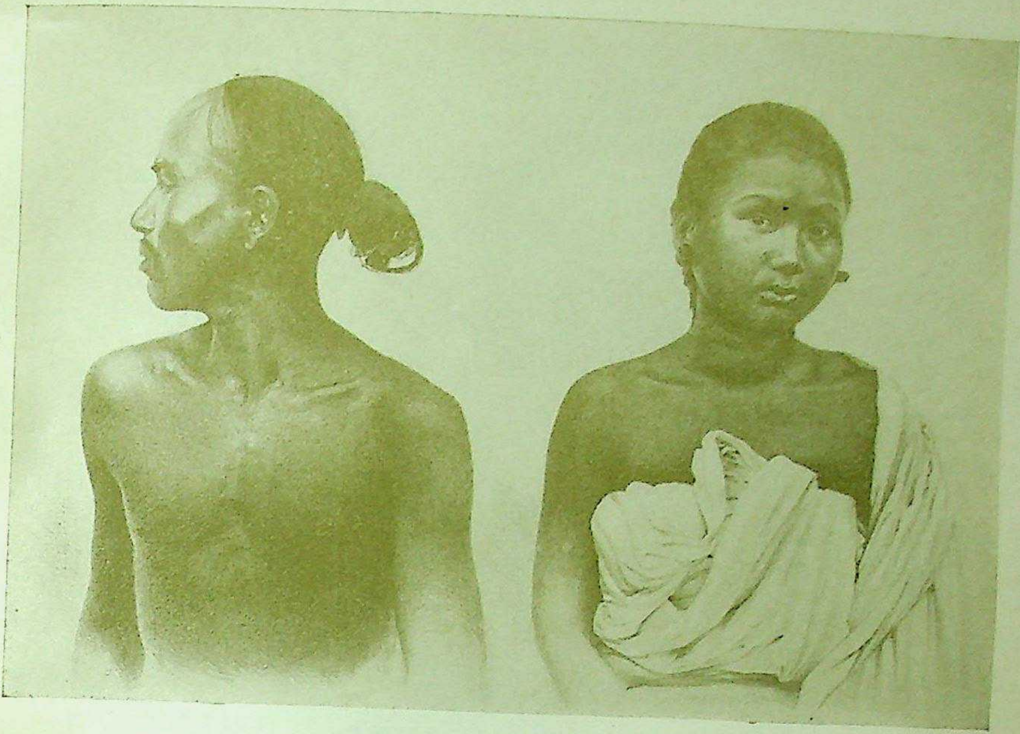

Plate XX *Kachari, Male and Female*

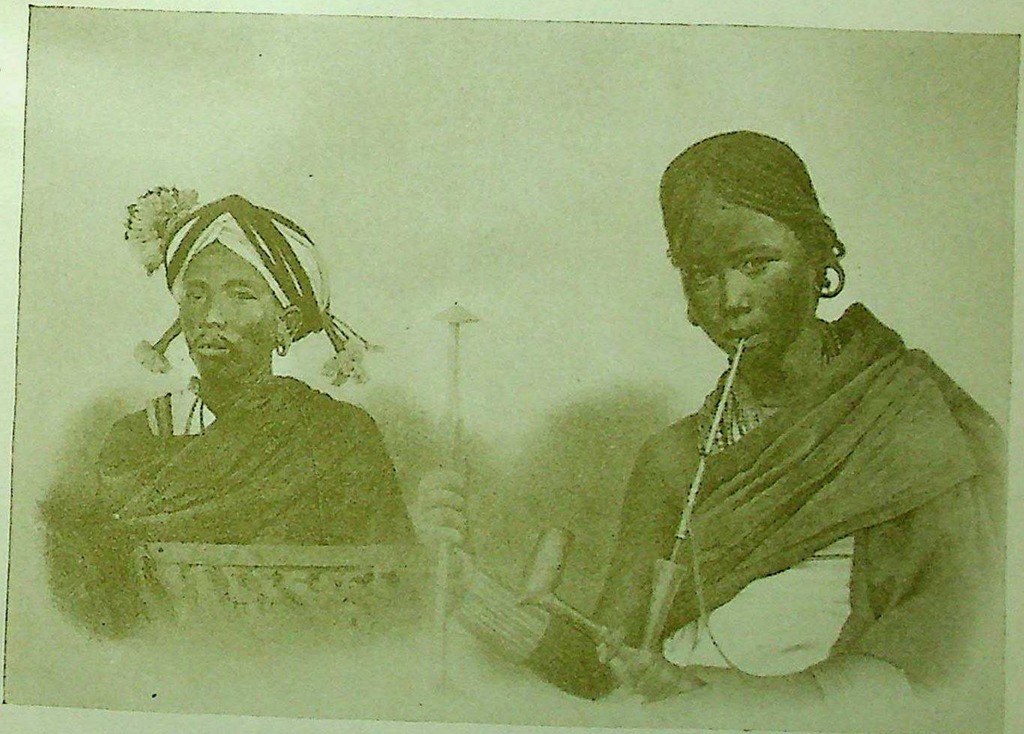

Plate XXI *Kukis, Male and Female*

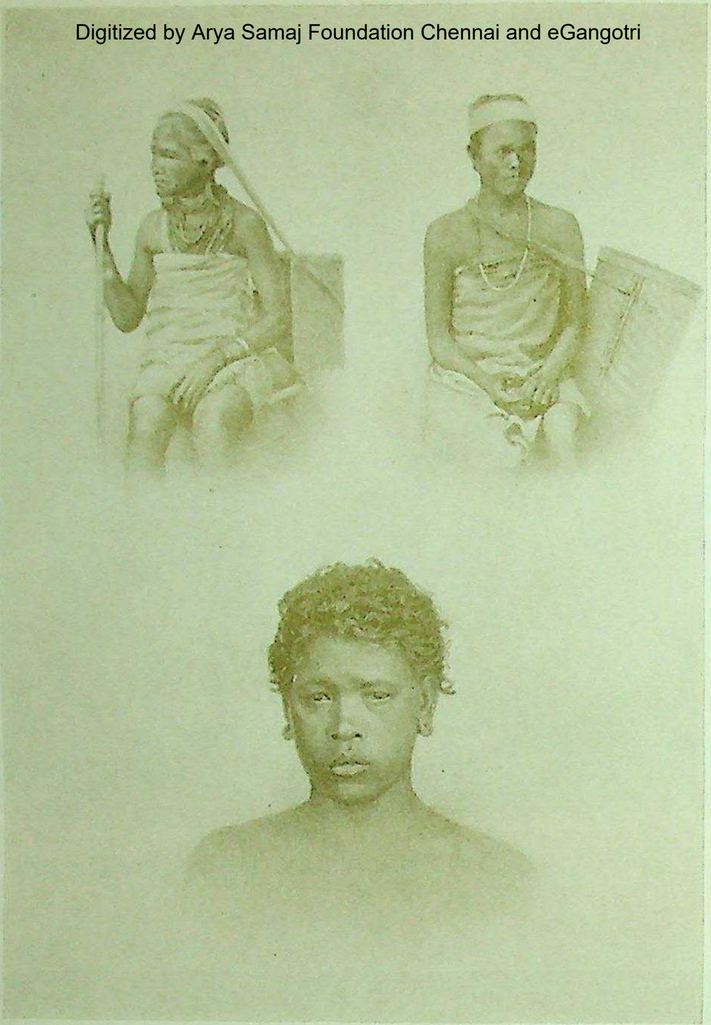

Plate XXII
*Garo Women and
Head of a Garo Boy*

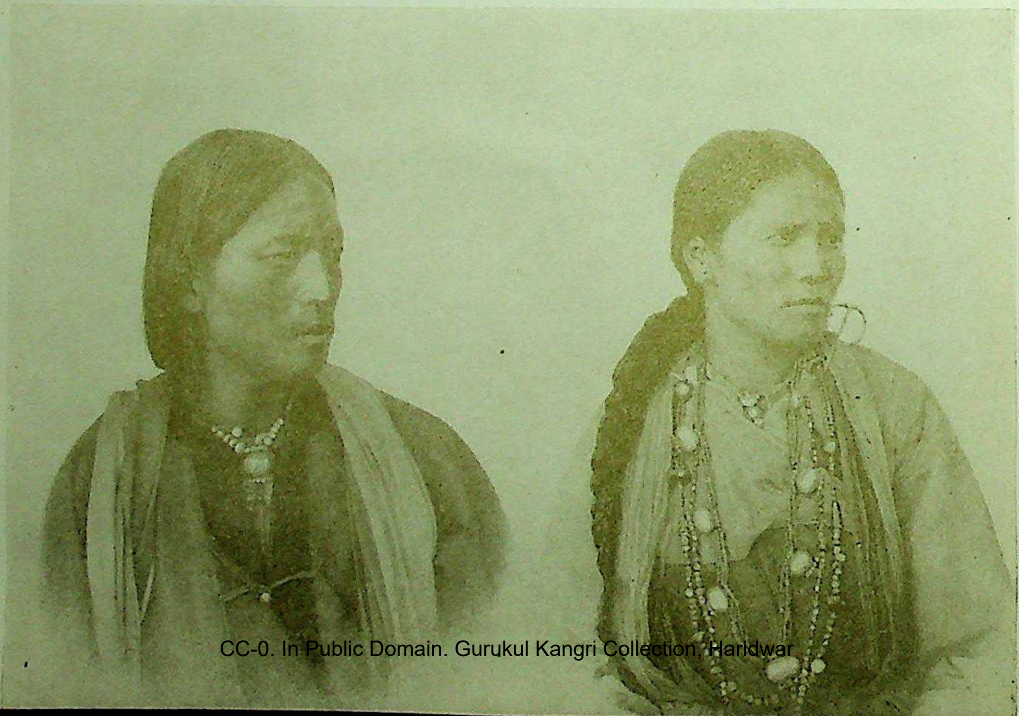

Plate XXIII
*Bhutias or Buts,
Male and Female*

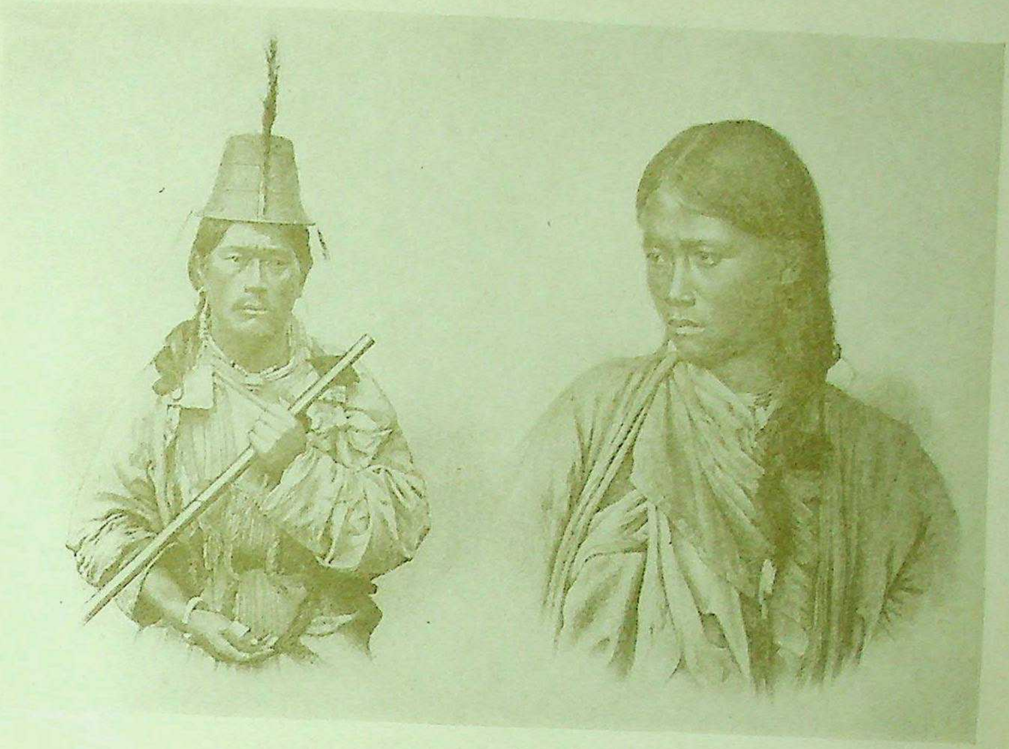

Plate XXIV *Lepchas (Sikkim)*

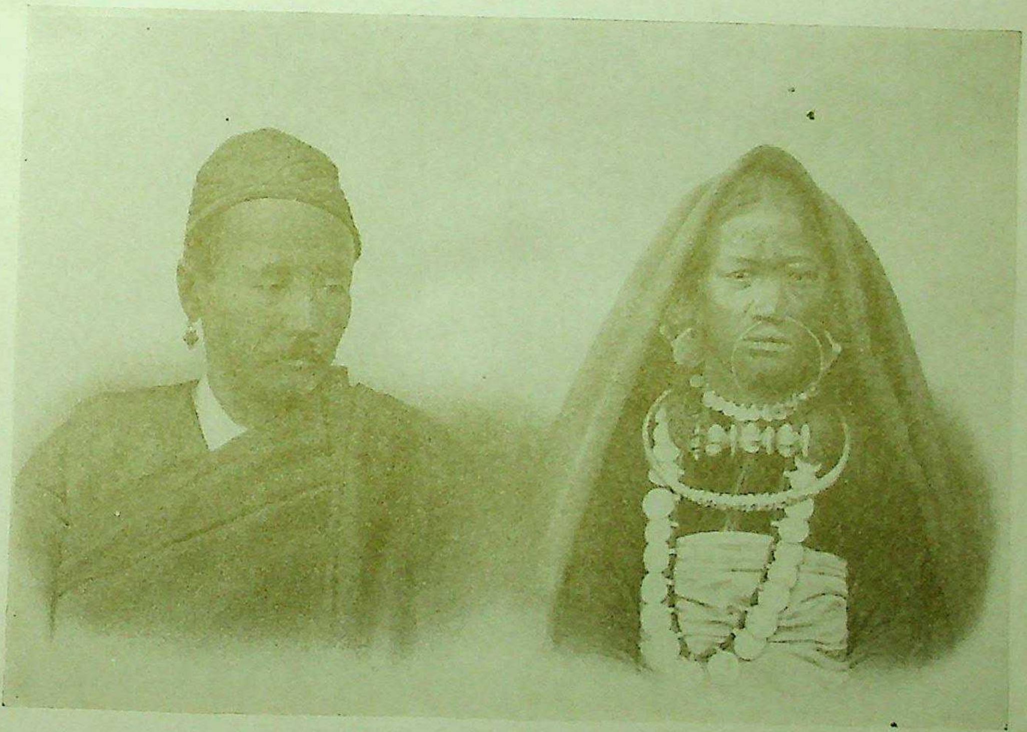

Plate XXV *Limbu, Male and Female*

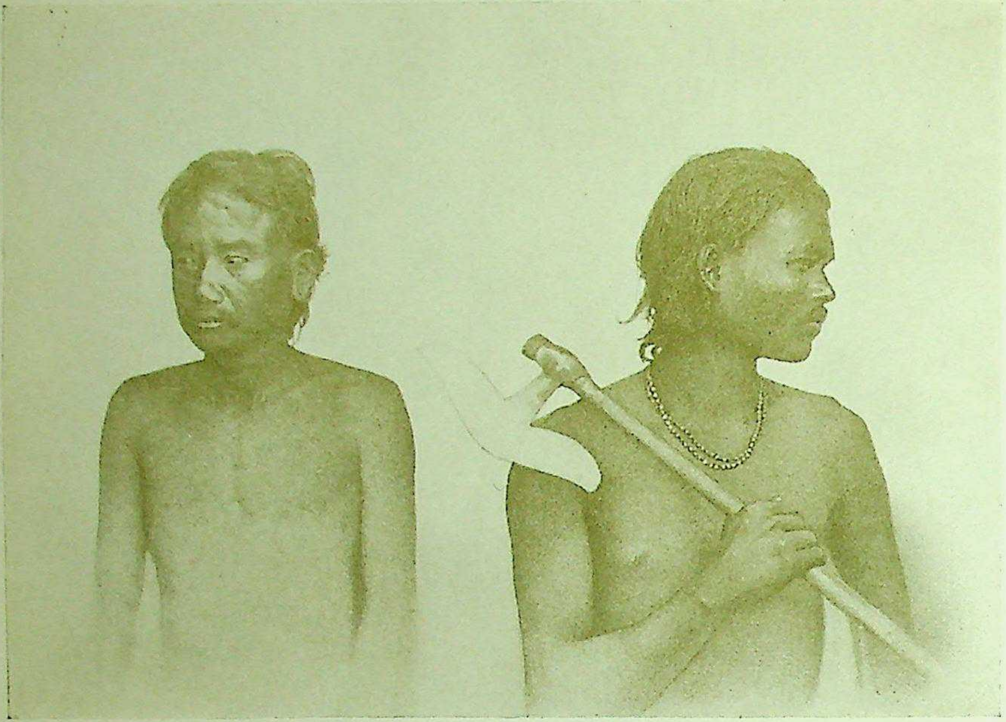

Plate XXVI *Fig. 1 A Mug. Fig. 2 A 'Ho' or Kol of Singbhum*

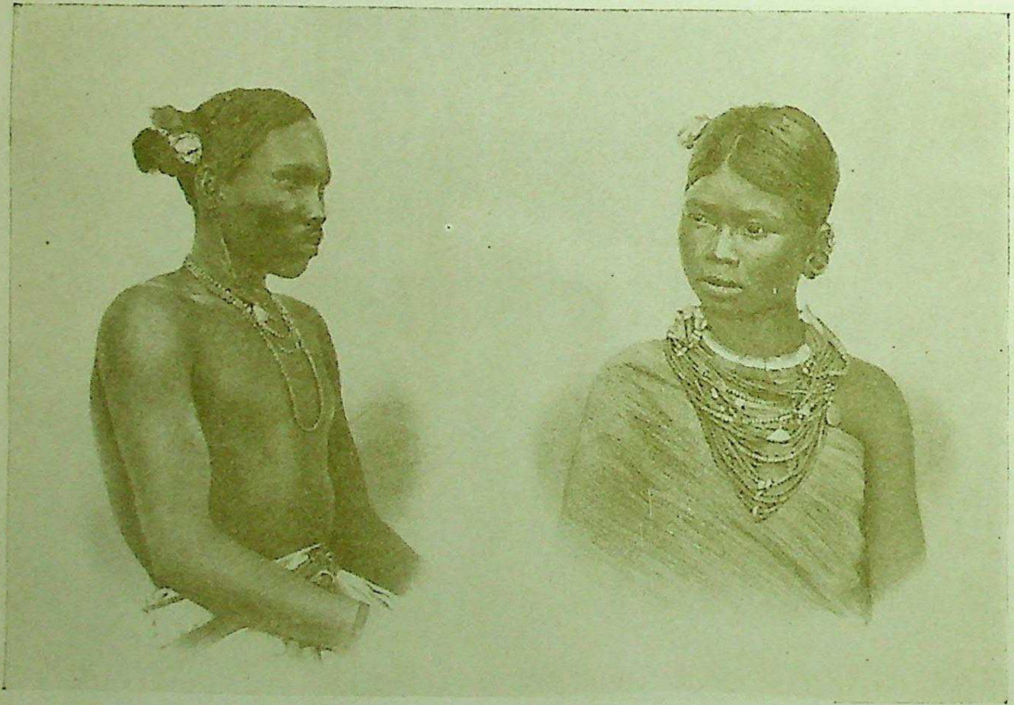

Plate XXVII *Mundas of Chutia Nagpur. Male and Female.*

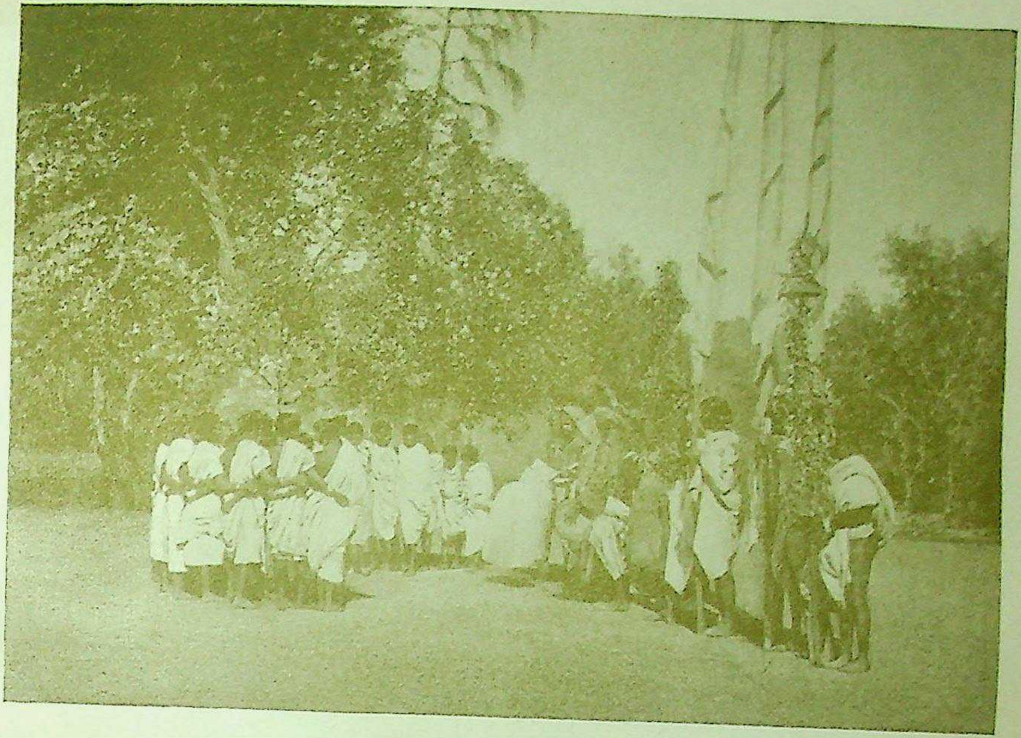

Plate XXVIII *A Dancing Group, Oraons and Mundas*

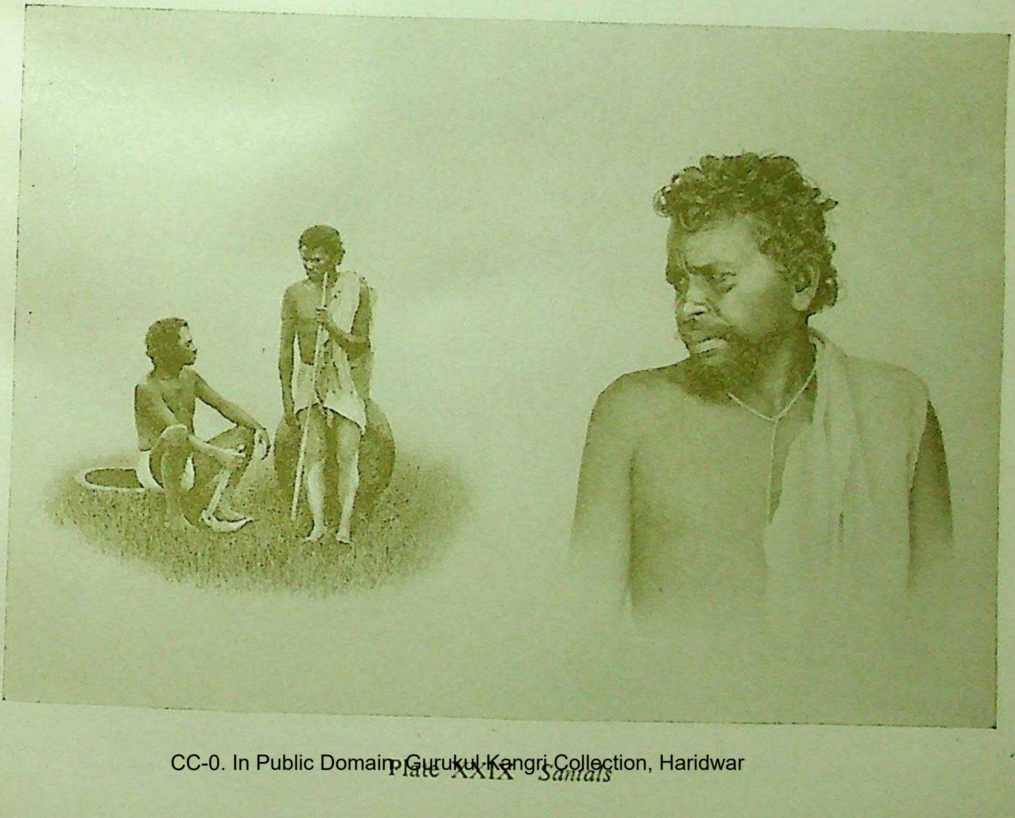

Plate XXIX *Santals*

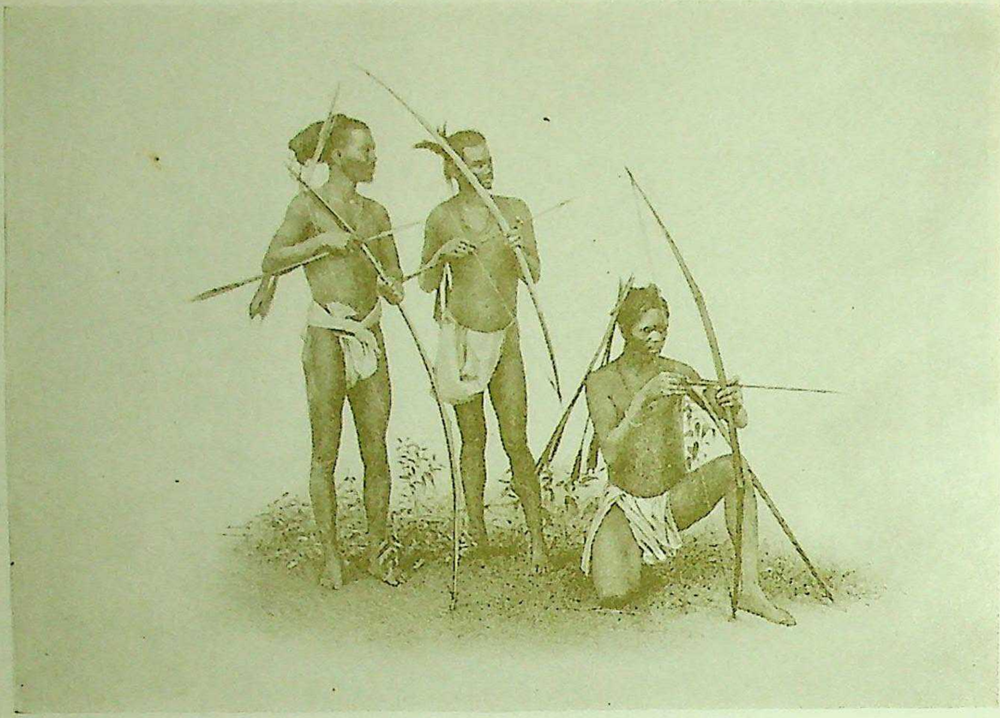

Plate XXX *A Group of Korwas*

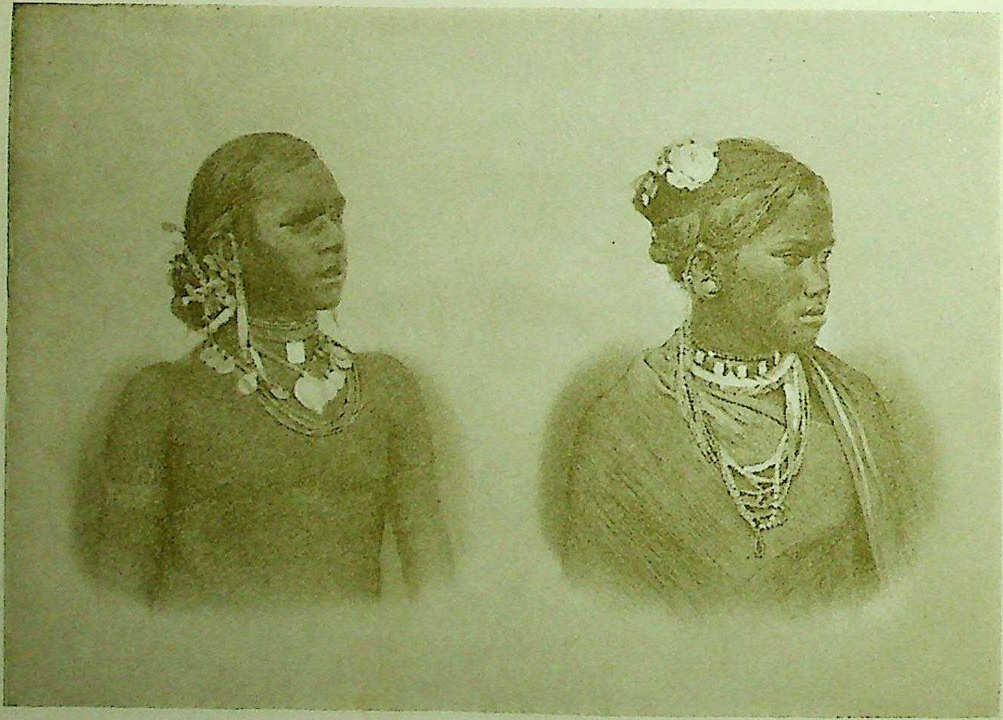

Plate XXXI *Fig. 1 An Oraon, age 23. Fig. 2 An Oraon Girl, age 15*

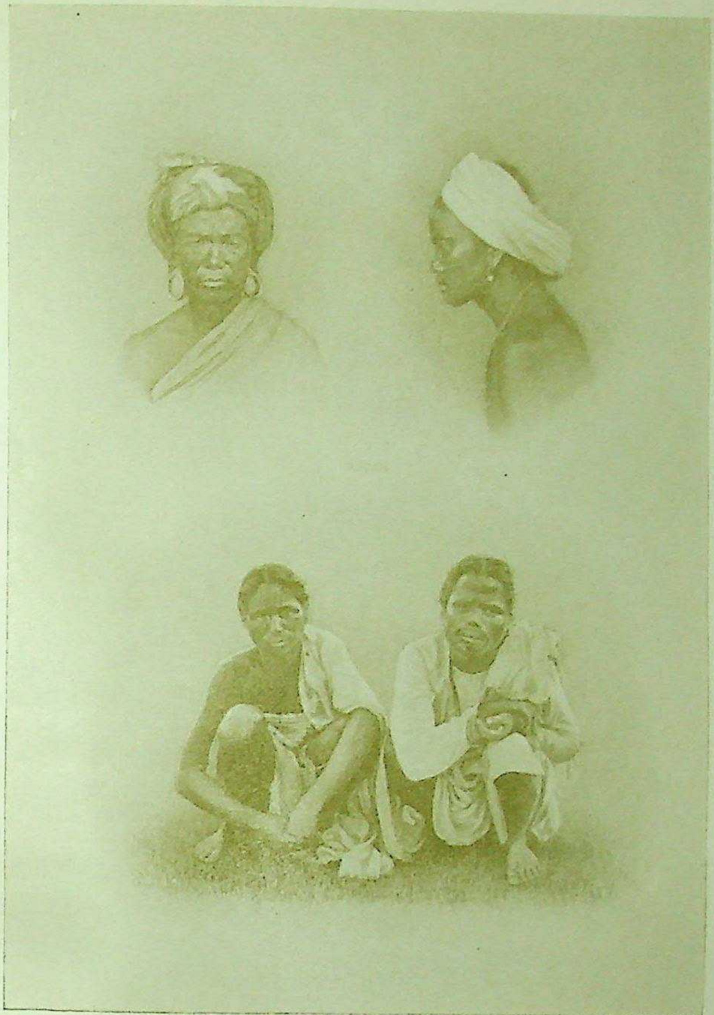

Plate XXXII Top : *Kocch,* Bottom : *Kukis*

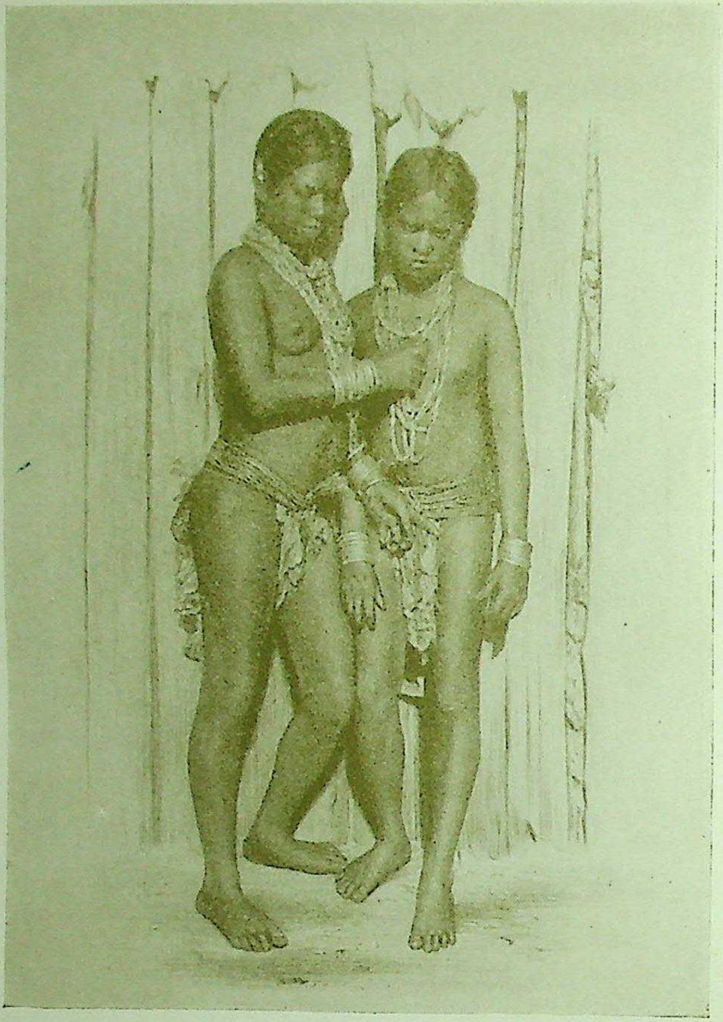

Plate XXXIII *Juang Girls*

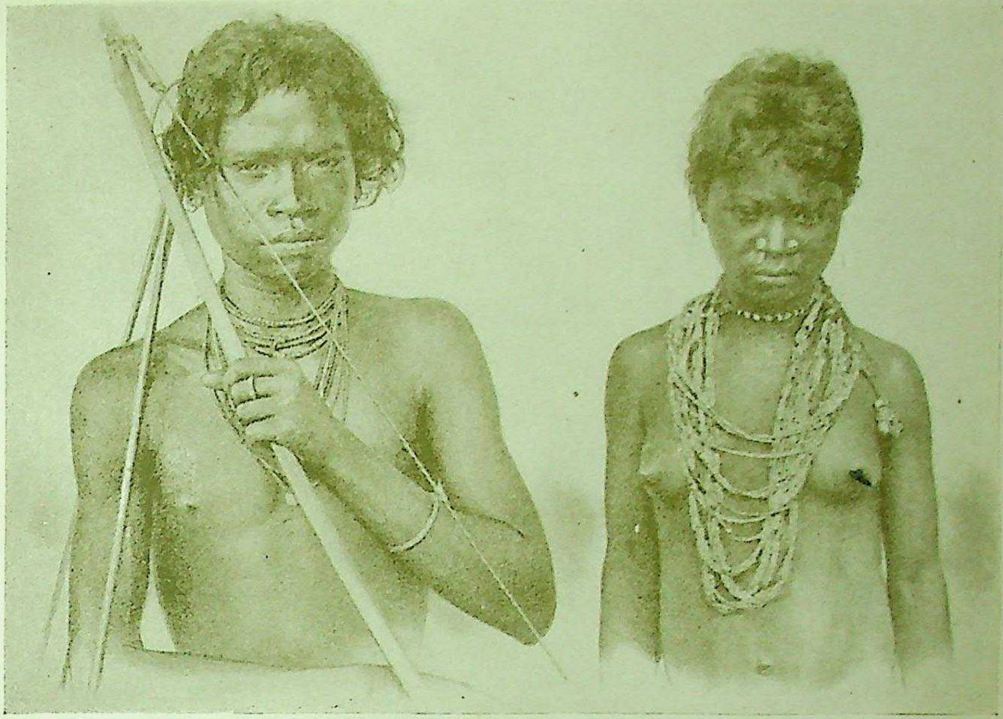

Plate XXXIV *Juang, Male and Female*

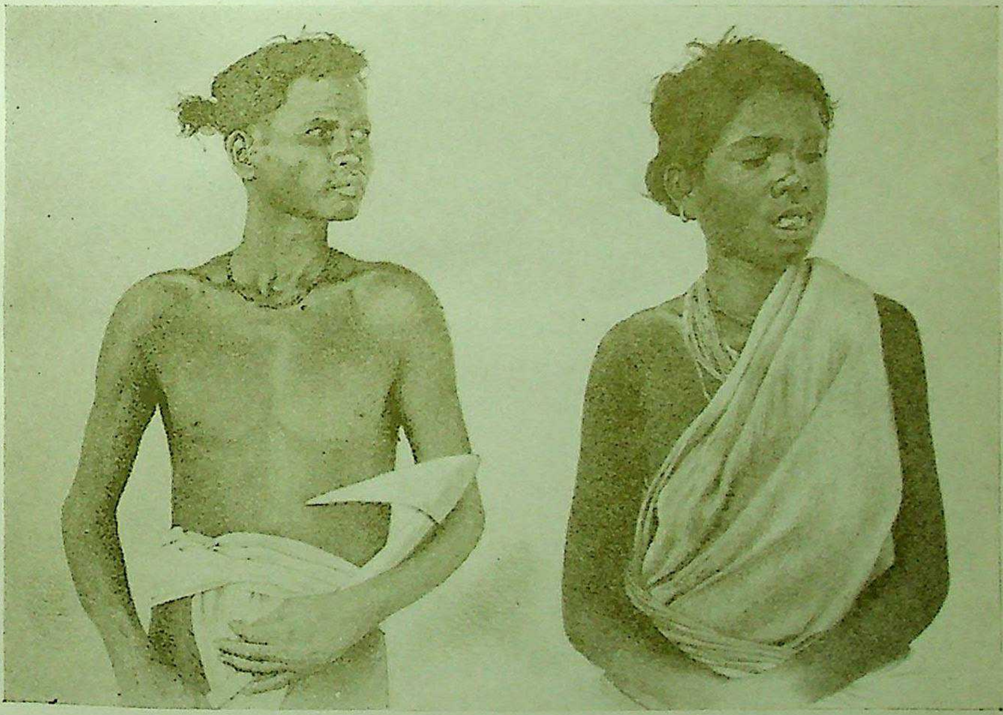

Plate XXXV *Bendkar, Male and Female*

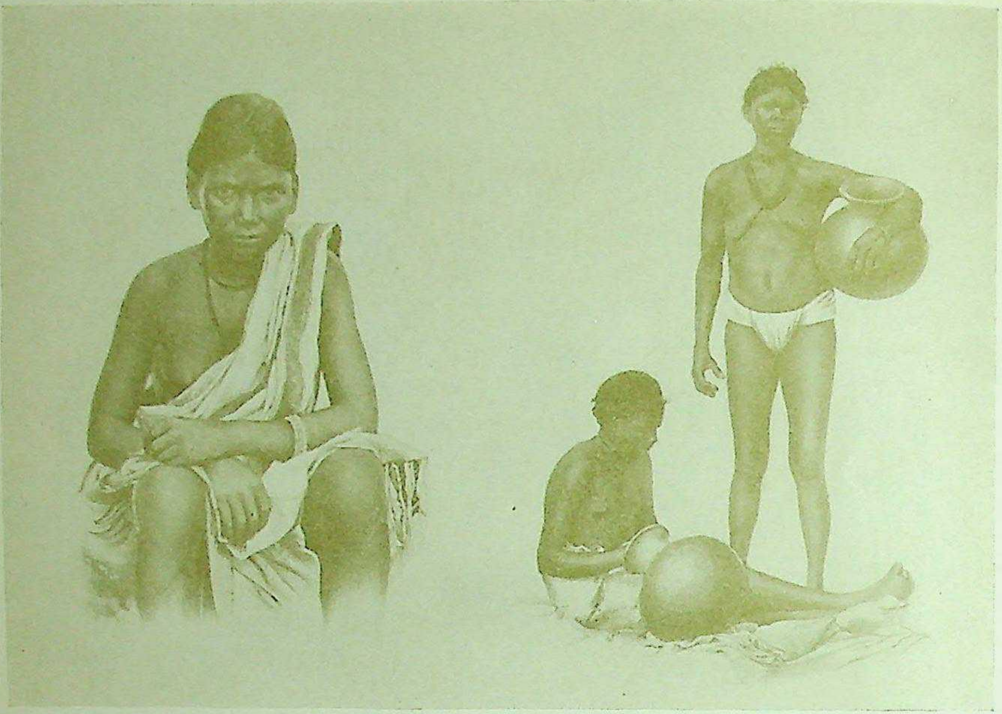

Plate XXXVI *Ho or Larka, Girl and Woman*

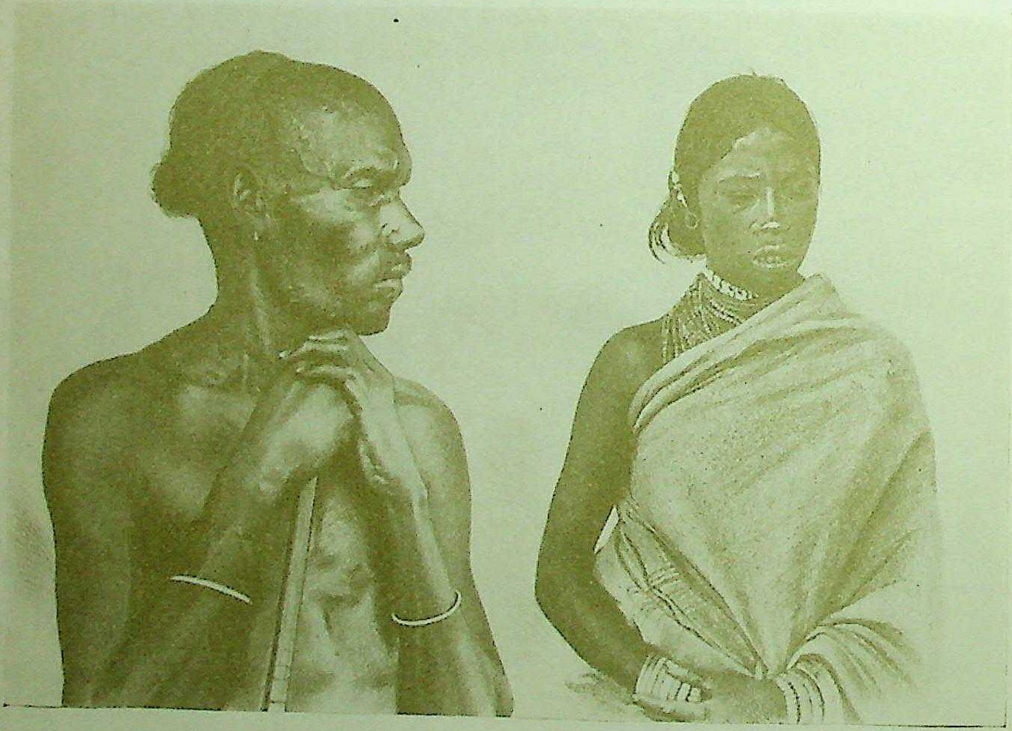

Plate XXXVII *Paori (or Pahari) Bhuiyas of Keonjhar, Male and Female*

GROUP VII

THE KOLARIANS

PRELIMINARY REMARKS

[151] In a preceding Chapter I noted certain traditions connecting the Kols with the Cheros, who prior to the Aryan occupation of the Gangetic Provinces were the dominant race in Gorakhpur, Bihar, and Shahabad, and ventured on the surmise that the now despised Kol was in those days the language of that part of India. I find this opinion has the strong support of Mr. Logan, who in a note which has been placed at my disposal, speaking of the Simang dialects of the Eastern Archipelago, says—

"The pronouns have the peculiar forms that were current in the dialects of that branch of the Himalayan people which predominated in the Gangetic basin and its confines before the Aryans advanced into it, and which spread its language and civilization eastward till they prevailed from Guzerat to Tonquin. These pronouns and many other common vocables are still used by the Kols or Santal tribes on the Ganges, the Kgi or Kasia in the Brahmaputra basin, the Palaung and the Mon or Peguans on the Irawaddy, the Kambojans on the Mekong, and the Anamese on the Tonquin."

Mr. Hodgson thought he could trace an affinity with Munda or Kol in the pronominalization of some of the languages of the broken tribes of Nepal analyzed by him, and some resemblance in physical traits and customs have been pointed out. Mr. Logan has noticed a linguistic affinity between the Kasias of Asam and the Kols, and I have in a previous chapter drawn attention to a very remarkable coincidence in the funeral ceremonies of the Hos (the Kols of Singbhum) and Kasias. The language of the Santals, the Mundas, and Kharrias of Chutia Nagpur, the Bhumij of Manbhum, the Hos of Singbhum is Kolarian, and though there are some slight dialectic differences, these tribes have no difficulty in understanding each other. The savage Korwa of Sirguja speaks a language less readily comprehended by the Munda or Ho, yet, when we examine it critically, we find that it evidently belongs to the same family. The Kurs[1] or Muasi of the Central Provinces carry the same tongue across the Mahadeva hills and westward through the forests of the Tapti and Narbada until it mingles with that of the Bhils, and it is found[2] to extend to the Gavilgarh range of hills near Elichpur. There is a tradition that the race speaking the Kolarian languages were once dominant in Talingana.

[152] Thus the vast area through which we find the Kol language permeating, disappearing at times like a river whose course is occasionally subterranean to appear again in distant regions as a stream from the same source, makes a study of the Kolarian people one of the most interesting that an Ethnologist can take up; but the interest is intensified when we find that, vast as the area is, it is insignificant in comparison with the numerous phases in the condition of the human race that varieties of existing Kolarians may be considered as exemplifying,

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[1] Papers by Revd. G. Hislop, Published by Sir R. Temple.

[2] *Journal, Asiatic Society, Bengal*, vol. XIII, for 1844, page 19.

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They are living illustrations of the progress of mankind almost from the stone age to the confines of modern civilization.

The special Ethnographical number of the *Journal of the Asiatic Society* published in 1866 contains a paper by me entitled the *Kols of Chutia Nagpur.* Under this appellation, according to the ordinary acceptation of the term, are included the Oraons as well as the Mundas and their cognates, but I will now adopt the classification suggested by Mr. George Campbell in his *Work on Indian Ethnology*, and treating as Kolarians those only whose language is Munda or Kol, exclude the Oraons who as a Dravidian race must be disposed of in a separate chapter.

In proceeding to describe the Kolarians of Bengal, I will commence with those who appear lowest in the scale of civilization and introduce my readers to the leaf clad mountaineers of Orissa.

SECTION 1

THE JUANGS

I class the Juangs with Kolarians chiefly in consequence of the linguistic affinity which apparently links them with that family.

Linguistic affinities : It is by no means certain, however, that they may not at one time have spoken a different language. It will be found on reference to the list of words annexed to this chapter that a great many of the terms used by the Juangs for the most familiar object are common or nearly so to them and to the Hos and Santals, and the pronouns and first of the numerals are identical ; but as they have lived for ages among people speaking the language of Utkala or Orissa, many Uriya words have been adopted by them in supercession of the terms previouslyused, and they have besides a number of vocables that I cannot connect with any Aryan, Kolarian, or Dravidian language. I find some words employed both by the Juangs and the Kharrias that have dropped out of the other Kol dialects, as 'gone', tooth, and 'lerang', moon, for which the Hos and Santals have adopted terms of Sanscrit derivation, and, on the whole, the Juang language approaches more closely to the Kharria than to the other Kol tongues.

Geographical distribution : The Juangs are found only in two of the Katak tributary estates, Dhenkanal and Keonjhur, and they are most numerous in the latter. I am informed there are thirty-two settlements of the tribe in Keohjhur occupying the hill country to the south of the Keonjhurgarh as far as Hundah, or between 21° 20′ and 21° 40′ of north latitude and 85° 30′ and 85° 45′ of east longitude. They have not got all this tract to themselves, the Hill Bhuiya villages and many colonies of Goalas occupying a superior portion of it. It is probable that they have been ousted by the Bhuiyas from the fertile valleys, and are thus compelled to restrict their cultivation to the steep sides of hills. We may give twenty as the average number of houses in each settlement, and estimate the Juang population in Keonjhur [153] at about three thousand people. They have no traditions which affiliate them with any other race, and notwithstanding the similarity in their languages (but of which they knew nothing till I pointed it out to them), they repudiate

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all connectionship with Hos or Santals. They aver very positively that they are autochthones in Keonjhur, the direct descendants of the first human beings that appeared or were produced in that country or indeed in the world. For they assert a claim to be the first produced of the human race, though they make no pretensions to be the fathers of mankind.

Traditions : The head quarters of the tribe or cradle of the race they consider to have been the Gonasika in north latitude 21° 30′ and east longitude 85° 37′, where issues from two holes in a rock, supposed to bear resemblance to the nostrils of a cow, a stream which is the source of the Baitarani.[3] They assert that the Baitarani on whose banks they were created, is older than the Ganges, and the present Juang inhabitants of the village of Gonasika and other villages in the vicinity occupy the very soil from which the parents of their race were produced. They have no traditions to record, except that very long ago, nine hundred Juangs left the country of their birth and went to Dhekanal, and then the Bhuiyas came, and took up the lands of the brethren who had left them ; but it is more probable, that they were driven out by the Bhuiyas who are now in those hills the dominant race. The Bhuiyas however deny this, asserting that they are the true autochthones and that the Juangs are interlopers. There is a tradition of a Bora Raja (probably some allusion to the *Vara avatar* of Vishnu) having had a fort in the heart of the country now occupied by Juangs, the remains of which are still in existence, and it is said that the Juangs are the remnant of his people.

The Juangs are in habits and customs the most primitive people I have met with or read of. They occupy a hill country in which stone implements, the earliest specimens of human ingenuity that we possess, are occasionally found, and though they have now abandoned the use of such implements and have lost the art of making them, it is not improbable that they are the direct descendants of those ancient stone cutters, and that we have in the Juangs representatives of the stone age *in situ*.

Until foreigners[4] came amongst them, they must have used such weapons or none ; for they had no knowledge whatever of metals. They have no iron smiths, nor smelters of iron. They have no word in their own language for iron or other metals. They neither spin nor weave, nor have they ever attained to the simplest knowledge of pottery.

In the hills of Keonjhur they are still semi-nomadic in their habits, living together in villages during a portion of the year, but often changing the sites, and occupying isolated huts in the midst of their patches of cultivation whilst the crops are on the ground.

Dwellings : Gonasika, one of the largest of their villages, I found to contain twenty-five houses of Juangs. The huts are amongst the smallest that human beings over deliberately constructed as dwellings. They measure about six feet by eight, and are very low, with doors so small as to preclude the idea of a corpulent householder. Scanty as are the above dimensions for a family dwelling, **[154]** the interior is divided into two compartments, one of which is the store room, the other used for all domestic arrangements. The 'Paterfamilias' and all his belongings of the female sex huddle together in this one stall not much larger than a dog kennel ; for the boys there is a separate dormitory.

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[3] *Vaitarani*, the Hindu Styx.

[4] This was written before I had seen Mr. Ball's paper, who has a similar remark regarding the Kharrias, another Kolarian tribe noticed by him in Manbhum.

This latter is a building of some pretensions at the entrance of the village. It is constructed with a solid plinth of earth raised about four feet, and has two apartments, one inner and closed, in which the musical instruments of the village are kept and most of the boys sleep. The other is open on three sides, that is, it has no walls but the eaves spread far beyond the plinth, and the inmates are effectually protected. This is where all guests are lodged, and it makes a convenient traveller's rest.

Cultivation : The Juangs cultivate in the rudest way, destroying the forest trees by the deadly process of girdling them, burning all they can of the timber when it dries and sowing in the ashes. They thus raise a little early rice, Indian corn, pulses, pumpkins, sweet potatoes, ginger, and red pepper, seed all thrown into the ground at once to come up as it can.

Food : They declare they subsist every year more on wild roots and fruits than on what they rear, but I doubt if they are so badly off as they pretend to be. The area of their cultivation appeared proportionate to their numbers. They pay no rent, being under obligation to serve the Raja, repair his house, and carry his burdens when required to do so in lieu of money payment, and they spend no money in clothes ; it is difficult to understand therefore their not having a sufficiency of whole some food, unless it be that they spend all their substance in drink. They are no doubt addicted to ardent spirits, and they are obliged to buy what they consume, as they have not acquired the art of distilling or even of brewing rice beer which every Kol understands.

In regard to food they are not in the least particular, eating all kinds of flesh, including mice, rats, monkeys, tigers, bears, snakes, frogs, and even offal, and for them the jungles abound in spontaneously produced vegetables. In the quest of such food they possess all the instinct of the animal, discerning at a glance what is nutritive, and never mistaking a noxious for an edible fungus or root.

Weapons : The Juangs do not look a war-like people, but when urged to it by the Bhuiyas whose lead they invariably follow, they are sometimes troublesome. They use the bow and arrow, but their favorite weapon is the primitive sling made entirely of cord. They take "pebbles from the brook," or stones as they find them. They have no idea of fashioning them to produce more efficient projectiles.

My first introduction to the Juangs was in 1866, whilst with the Superintendent of the Katak Tributary Mahals engaged in settling a boundary dispute between Keonjhur and Bonai. We were far away from any Juang village, but Mr. Ravenshaw sent for some specimens of this interesting people, and a well selected party, consisting of a matron, half a dozen comely maidens, and about as many men, responded to the call.

In the *Journal of the Asiatic Society, Bengal*, vol. XXV, for 1856, page 295, there is a brief notice of the Juangs accompanying some very clever but very grotesque sketches that give a correct idea of the singular costume of the women, but convey an impression of malformation and hideousness, which, judging from the figures of our visitors on the above occasion, grossly calumniates the race.

[155] Dress : The females of the group had not amongst them a particle of clothing, their sole covering for purposes of decency consisted in a girdle composed of several strings of beads from which depended before and behind small curtains of leaves. Adam and Eve sewed fig leaves together and made themselves aprons. The Juangs are not so far advanced ; they take young shoots of the Asan (*Terminalia tomentosa*) or any tree with long soft leaves, and arranging them so as to form a flat and scale like surface of the required size, the sprigs are simply stuck in the girdle fore and aft and the toilet is complete. The girls were well developed and finely formed specimens of the race, and as the light leafy costume left the outlines of the figure entierly nude, they would have made good studies for a sculptor.

The beads that form the girdle are small tubes of burnt earthen ware made by the wearers. They also wore a profusion of necklaces of glass beads, and brass ornaments in their ears and on their wrists, and it was not till they saw that I had a considerable stock of such articles to dispose of, that they got over their shyness and ventured to approach us.

Dances : They made their first appearance at night and danced by torch light ; it was a wild weird-like sight. The men sang as they danced, accompanying themselves on deep-sounding tambourines ; the girls holding together and circling round them in a solemnly grotesque manner. There was a want of spirit in the performance, for they were shy and timid creatures, and the dancing by torch light before so many strange spectators was evidently no pleasure to them. They executed the movements under the orders of the men with an unimpassioned obedience, as if they were so many dancing dogs or monkeys. The disarrangement of their leaves in the movements of the dance was a source of great anxiety to them, compelling them frequently to fall out of their places and retreat into the darkness to adjust their plumage. It had been the intention of the party to flit by night as they had appeared ; but, moved by an exhibition and liberal distribution of bright glass beads, they were induced to stay that night and give us a performance by day light.

Next day they came to my tent at noon, and whilst I conversed with the males on their customs, language, and religion, the girls sat nestled together in a corner, for a long time silent and motionless as statues, but after an hour or two had elapsed the crouching nymphs showed signs of life and symptoms of uneasiness, and more attentively regarding them, I found that great tears were dropping from the downcast eyes like dew drops on the green leaves. On my tenderly seeking the cause of their distress, I was told that the leaves were becoming dry, stiff, and uncomfortable, and if they were not allowed to go to the woods for a change, the consequences would be serious, and they certainly could not dance. It was a bright dry day, and the crisp rustling as they rose to depart confirmed the statement.

When they returned arrayed in fresh leaves, we induced them to give us not only the solemn measure of the evening before, but to perform a variety of sportive dances, some quite dramatic in effect, and it was altogether a most interesting "ballet." In one figure, the girls moved round in single file keeping the right hand on the right shoulder of the girl in front, in another with bodies inclined, they wreathed their arms and advanced and retreated in line. In this movement, the performance bore a strong resemblance to one of the Kol dances. Then we had the bear dance. The girls acting independently advance with bodies so much inclined, that their hands touch the ground ; thus they [156] move not unlike bears, and by a motion from the knees the bodies wriggle violently, and the broad tails of green leaves flap up and Pown in a most ludicrous manner, The pigeon dance followed : the action of a love-making pigeon when he struts, pouts, sticks out his breast, and scrapes the ground with his wings was well imitated, the hands of the girls doing duty as wings. Then came a pig and tortoise dance, in which the motions of those animals were less felicitously rendered, and the quail dance in which they squatted and pecked at the ground after the fashion of those birds. They concluded with the vulture dance, a highly dramatic finale. One of the men was made to lie on the ground and represent a dead body. The girls in approaching it imitated the hopping, sidling advance of the bird of prey, and using their hands as beaks, nipped and pinched the pseudo-corpse in a manner that made him occasionally forget his character and yell with pain. This caused great amusement to his tormentors.

I had heard of a "ballet" called 'the Cocks and Hens', but this they could not be induced to exhibit. It was admitted that it was impossible to keep the leaves in proper position whilst they danced it. It was too much of a romp, especially for a day performance.

The 'corps de ballet' were favorable specimens of the Juang race. They were belles who had taken evident pains in the arrangement of the simple elements of their toilet. Their hair was carefully put up and the leaves disposed of in the most becoming fashion. At Gonasika, I saw them in thair more normal state, when they returned from their work in the evening with dishevelled hair, dusty bodies and disordered attire, e.g., somewhat withered leaves, and it was truly like a dream of the stone age ; but each lady had brought back with her fresh material for her evening dress.

Legends : The males of the community have abandoned the leaves and use in lieu the smallest quantity of cotton cloth that can be made to serve the purposes of decency. The women, it is said, are deterred by superstition from following their example, but the tradition or traditions to account for it are apparently of Brahmanical concoction. There are several ; the simplest and prettiest is connected with the origin of the Baitarni. The river goddess emerging for the first time from the Gonasika rock, came suddenly on a rollicking party of Juangs dancing naked, and ordering them to adopt leaves on the moment as a covering, laid on them the curse that they must adhere to that costume for ever or die.[5]

This story is told for the Juangs rather than by them. Their own idea simply is the converse of the rule of civilized nations. They deem that the fashion of dress should never change, and that for females especially it should be simple and cheap. The notion must tend to conserve the Juangs in their present habits of hill and forest life. They must be where there is a plentiful supply of the material of nature's providing. I have not heard of any of the tribe having settled in places where it would be difficult to follow their inclination in dress.

The old men tell me that they, the males, used to wear *kopins*[6] made from the bark of a tree called Tumba. This is a tradition that takes them back to the days when they had the woods to themselves and knew nothing of piece-goods.

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[5] I am informed by Captain J. Johnstone that he has at length induced the Juang females to clothe themselves, he supplying the first robes. If no misfortune follow the innovation, it will probably be permanent ; so when the Juang girls posed themselves for the photographs from which the illustrations given with this work were taken, it was almost their last appearance in *leaves*.

[6] 'Kopin', a narrow strip of cloth worn round the loins and between the legs.

[157] The Reverend S. Hislop has informed us that in the remote parts of the Chanda district some of the Madian division of the Gonds are attired like the Juangs. He says, "the women wear no clothes at all, instead of which they fasten with a string passing round their waists a branch of leafy twigs to cover them before and behind." He says a similar custom is said to obtain amongst the Chenchwas that inhabit the jungles between the Madians and Masulipatam. It did exist till about 30 years ago among the Holiers in the vicinity of Mangalor.

The Singbhum Kols have a tradition that they were once similarly attired, and during the American war, when cotton was so dear, they told the cloth merchants that they would revert to their leaves if cloth was not sold cheaper ! Manchester beware !

Physical traits : The predominating physical characteristics of the Juangs, as I saw them massed in their village, appeared to me to be great lateral projection of the cheek bones or zygomatic arches and general flatness of feature ; forehead upright but narrow and low and projecting over a very depressed nasal bone ; nose of the pug species, alae spreading ; mouths large and lips very thick, but upper jaw rarely prognathous, though the lower jaw and chin are receding. Hair coarse and frizzly ; prevailing color a reddish brown, from 27 to 29 inclusive, of the color table.

I observe that some of them had oblique eyes of the Indo-Chinese type, but in this feature there was considerable variety.

Tattooing : It is noticeable that the Juang women tattoo their faces with the same marks that are used by the Mundas and Kharrias, and (probably adopted from the Mundas) by the Oraons. Three strokes on the forehead just over the nose, and three on each of the temples. They attach no meaning to the marks, have no ceremony in adopting them, and are ignorant of their origin.

Stature : They are a small race like the Oraons, the males averaging less than five feet in height. The women not more than four feet eight inches. The Ho girls of Singhbhum look like giantessess beside them, and the males in stature and carriage are equally inferior to the Ho men. The Juang males have round shoulders, and walk with a slouching pace. The Hos are upright in carriage, and have a stately manly stride, nor is it necessary to go to Singhbhum to find Hos to compare with them. Many of the latter tribe have emigrated from Singhbhum and taken up their abodes with the Juangs and Bhuiyas in the Keonjhur hills, and, though in an inferior position working as farm laborers, the Hos retain their superiority of physique. The Juangs appear to bend under their burdenbearing lot. The Hos never, if they can help it, carry burdens, the use amongst them of the block wheeled carts being almost universal.

Religion : The Juangs appear to be free from the belief in witchcraft, which is the bane of the Kols and perniciously influences nearly all other classes in the Jungle and Tributary Mahals. They have not, like the Kharrias, the reputation of being deeply skilled in sorcery. They have in their own language no terms for 'God', for 'heaven' or 'hell', and, so far as I can learn, no idea of a future state. They offer fowls to the sun when in distress, and to the earth to give them its fruits in due season. On these occasions an old man officiates as priest, he is called Nagam. The even tenor of their lives is unbroken by any obligatory religious ceremonies.

[158] **Marriages** : Marriage is recognized, but is brought about in the simplest manner. If a young man fancies a girl, he sends a party of his friends to propose for her, and if the offer is accepted, a day is fixed, and a load of rice in husk is presented on his behalf. The bridegroom does not go himself to the bride's house, his friends go for her and return with her and her friends, and they make merry, eating and dancing, and all stay and make a night of it. In the morning the bridegroom dismisses the bride's friends with a present of three measures of husked and three of unhusked rice, and this is a full and sufficient solemnization. A man may have more wives than one, if he can afford it, but no Juang has ever ventured on more than two at a time. They are divided into tribes and are exogamous.

Disposal of the dead : They burn their dead, and throw the ashes into any running stream, and their mourning is an abstinence for three days from flesh and salt. They erect no monuments, and have no notion of the worship of ancestors. The dead are burned with their heads to the south ; in this they agree with the Hos and their cognates, and differ from the Hindus. If cremation is found to be the custom of many of the aboriginal tribes, may it not have been the practice of the earliest of mankind and account in some measure for the rarity of human bones in alluvium containing flint implements. If the Juangs had borrowed the custom from the Hindus, they would have followed the practice of the latter in placing the corpse on the pyre. All the tribes that I have fallen in with speaking dialects of the Kolarian language burn their dead.

Oaths : The Juangs swear on earth from an ant hill and on a tiger skin. The ant hill is a sacred object in the eyes of the Kharria tribe, and the tiger skin is introduced, when Hos and Santals are sworn.

SECTION 2

THE KHARRIAS

The tribes that are linguistically most closely allied to the Juangs are the Kharrias. They are found in Singhhum in a very wild state, living much in backwoods and on the tops of hills apart from the Hos and Bhumij, who are somewhat in dread of them, as these isolated Kharrias have the reputation of being great wizards. They are found in the Manbhum hills bearing the same name, and I apprehend that the people called 'Birhor' in the Hazaribagh District are of the same tribe. The Birhors call themselves Hindus, live in the jungles, and subsist on wild animals, honey, and what they can obtain by the exchance of jungle produce with people of the plains, They are great adepts at ensnaring monkeys and other small animals, and sell them alive or eat them. They have no cultivation whatever, but they are apparently Kolarian, as among themselves they converse in Kol. They sell *chob*, a strong fibre of which ropes and string for various purposes are made, honey, wax, and *sikas*, the sticks like bows for carrying loads banghy fashion, and banghy ropes; and with the proceeds and the spontaneous edible productions of the forest they manage to exist and clothe themselves. There are people called Birhors in Chutia Nagpur proper and Jashpur, who live in an equally wild state, but communicate with each other in a dialect of Hindi. They are a small, dirty, miserable looking race, who have the credit of devouring their parents, and when I taxed them with it, they did not deny that such a custom had once obtained among them.[7]

[159] **Distribution** : The Kharrias are also seen in villages with other tribes as farm laborers, but in the Chutia Nagpur estate they are found in large communities, and the Kharrias belonging to these communities are far more civilized than those who live apart.

The best settlements lie near the southern Koel river, one of the streams that rise on the Chutia Nagpur plateau, the principal source of the Brahmani.

This river the Kharrias venerate as the Santals the Damudar, and into it they throw the ashes of their dead. At the village of Aghurma not far from it, I collected about me a number of the tribe, and they gave the following account of themselves.

Traditions : Their ancestors were formerly settled between Rohtas and Patna. They quarrelled with their relations and fled into the jungles, and wandered till they came to the Koel river, where finding unoccupied lands to suit them, they settled first at a place they called Pora on that river, from whence they spread in different directions ; but their settlements have much diminished in consequence of the interference of interlopers who obtained from the Raja the farms of their villages, aud many have gone to settle in the estate called Biru Kasalpur,[8] the landlord of which gives them lands to clear on very fair terms.

But there was also a tradition that they had come from the south, and that, driven from the country they had originally occupied, they had ascended the valley of the Koel till they found themselves in their present location. Their veneration for the Koel, and the fact that in some customs where they differ from the Kols, they approach the practices of Dravidian tribes supports this account, but both may be true. They may have fallen back south from the Gangetic provinces, passed through the Vindhyan range, and come gradually round to the south-eastern watershed of Chutia Nagpur.

Religion : They worship the sun under the name of Bero. Every head of a family should, during his life time, make not less than five sacrifices to this divinity ; the first of fowls, the second of a pig, third of a white goat, fourth of a ram, and fifth of a buffalo. He is then considered sufficiently propitiated for that generation and regarded as an ungrateful God, if he does not behave handsomely to his votary. In praying to Bero, they address him as *Parmeswar*, the Hindi word for God. The Ho term *Sing bonga*, they do not know. The sacrifices are always made in front of an ant hill, which is used as an altar.

This peculiar mode of sacrificing has fallen into desuetude among the Hos and Mundas, but on my making some enquiries on the subject from old men of those tribes, I was informed that it was orthodox, though not now generally practised

Their religious festivals are almost identical with those of the Mundas, and will be described in the account of that tribe. In worshipping Bero, the head of the family, with the Kharrias as with the Hos, acts as priest, but at the Sarhul and other *Pujas* or sacrifices offered in behalf of the community, a person is employed as village priest, whose office and name—Pahn—appear to me to have been introduced into Chutia Nagpur by the Oraons. The Hos have no priests.

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[7] A further notice of the Birhors is given below.

[8] The south-western corner of Lohardagga district.

I S. 2—21

From the Hindus they have adopted the custom of solemnizing the boring of the ears of the children, and the occasion when the hair is for the first time tied up. They have further ceremonial observances similarly derived ; but this probably will only be found **[160]** among the Kharrias on the Koel, who are much mixed up with Hindus and are under Hindu headmen. I have no doubt their village communities were at one period organized like those of the Mundas, and that they had headmen and village officers of their own tribe, but every trace of this is swept away, and it is strange that whilst the Mundas and Hos struggled for, and maintained, their old institutions, the Kharrias should have submitted to so degrading a change.

Marriage : The primitive idea of marriage with the Kharrias was a dance and a feast when the bride was first taken to the abode of her lord ; they have no word for marriage in their own language, but after certain festivities the bride and bridegroom are left to themselves, and next morning are carried to the river, and they and all the party bathe and wash their garments ; but under the Hindu term *bibah* certain ceremonies are superadded, borrowed from their neighbours, or to give the ceremony more importance in the eyes of the Hindus. On reaching the house of her father-in-law, the bride and bridegroom are bathed and anointed ; and the bridegroom marks his bride with red lead on her forehead. It will be observed that as with the Juangs the girl is brought by her own friends to the bridegroom's house, and the ceremonies such as they are take place there.

The nuptial dances of the Kharrias are very wild, and the gestures of the dancers and the songs all bear more directly than delicately on what is evidently considered the main object of the festivities, the public recognition of the consummation of the maraiage. The bride and bridegroom are carried through the dances seated on the hips of two of their companions.

Dancing is an amusement to which the Kharrias, like all Kolarians, are passionately devoted. The only noticeable difference in their style is that in the energy, vivacity and warmth of their movement they excel all their brethren.

Disposal of the dead : I have already noticed that the Kharrias I am describing burn their dead, and putting the ashes in an earthen vessel, throw it into the river. They afterwards set up in the immediate vicinity of their houses tall rough slabs of stone, and to these as representing the departed they make daily oblations.

On the whole, their customs sufficiently conform to those of the Mundas to confirm the relationship suggested by the affinity of the tongues ; but at the same time there is dissimilarity enough to indicate that, though they were originally one people, it must have been after a very long separation that they again met on the banks of the Koel.

These Kharrias are respectably dressed and comfortably housed, and as they are fair cultivators, they are well supplied with wholesome food. They, therefore, have very little resemblance to the Kharrias of the backwoods,[9] who live as precariously as beasts of prey, and it is difficult to imagine their being of the same race.[10]

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[9] *Vide.—Proceedings Asiatic Society, Bengal*, for August 1868, p. 120, Mr. Ball's paper on the Kherriahs.

[10] It is a singular circumstance that some tribes of Kharrias profess to be intensely exclusive in regard to

[161] The Koel Kharrias are in point of physique much on a par with the Mundas, rather coarser perhaps in feature and figure, but where they differ approximating more to the appearance of a north-eastern tribe.

Tattooing : The women are all tattooed with the marks on the forehead and temples common to so many of these tribes. Three parallel lines on the forehead, the outer lines terminating at the upper end in a crook and two on each temple. The Juang marks of this nature take up a larger space on the forehead and temples than those of the Mundas, the lines being longer and further apart. The Kharrias in regard to the space over which the marks extend, occupy a middle place between the Juangs and Mundas.

I have had no opportunity of ascertaining if the peculiarity noticed by Mr. Ball in treating of the Manbhum Kharrias,—their abstaining from the flesh of sheep and the use of its wool—is common to the Kharrias of Chutia Nagpur ; but I think, I should have heard of it, if it had been so. It is possible that the Kharrias Mr. Ball fell in with may call themselves the sheep tribe ; if so, they would according to the custom of other Kolarians be debarred from making any use of the animal.

SECTION 3

THE MUNDAS, HOS, BHUMIJ

Though the old Hindu bards are generally vindictively strong in the epithets of abuse they hurl at the aboriginal tribes, some of them, in their ambition to explain all things sacred and profane, deemed it necessary to assign to the *Dasyus* a genealogy which affiliates them with the best blood of the Aryans. The ugliest and blackest of the people of the Vindhyan Mountains were preternaturally the offspring of King Vena, and even for the Kols a noble ancestor has been found.

The following legend is quoted from Colonel Wilford's essays.[11] Yayāti divided his empire among his five sons. To Puru, the youngest, he gave India, or the middle part ; to Yadu, the ancestor of Krishna, the South or Deccan ; the North, to Anu ; and the West, to Turvasu. The offspring of Turvasu, according to the *Harivamsa*, settled in the south, and the tenth genera-

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cooking and eating. This characteristic I found most developed in villages of Chutia Nagpur where Kharrias were associated with Oraons under Brahman proprietors ; and it is a common saying in that part of the country that every Kharria must have his *Hariah*, i.e., cooking pot. He may not allow even his wife to cook for him, and if a stranger enters a house in which he keeps his earthen drinking and cooking vessels, and water pots, every vessel is polluted and the whole are destroyed or thrown away. This class of Kharrias are especially filthy in their habits, and it is not improbable that Hindus may have been more than ordinarily harsh in excluding them from their kitchens and inner apartments, and that the Kharrias retaliate by outcasting every body.

There is a tradition that Kharrias with another tribe called Purans were the aborigines of Mohurbhanj, one of the Katak Tributary Mahals. They aver that they and the family of the chief, (Bhanj), were all produced from a Pea-fowl's egg, the Bhanj from the yoke, the Purans from the white, the ·Kharrias from the shell,

[11] *Asiatic Researches*, vol. IX, page 91 and 92.

tion from him inclusive, consisting of four brothers, Pandya, Kerala, Chola, and Kola, divided the empire they had inherited. Kola lived in the northern part of the Peninsula and his descendants are called Kols or Kolers to this day, and from them India was called *Kolaria*.

This places the chief seat of the Kols in Talingana, but it does not appear there are any of the race now there, or that the language spoken has in it any traces of Kol.[12]

I have already in my account of the Cheros and Kharwars noticed that Bihar, the ancient Magadha, has numerous antiquities attributed to the Cheros and Kols, and from the traditions handed down it appears that the sovereigns of the country were at one time Cheros, the people being for the most part Kols. Doctor Buchanan Hamilton, the topographer, points to Kabar, the most important of the ruins in Bihar, attributed to the Cheros or Kols, as evidently the work of a powerful ruler and probably the strong-hold of the princes of the race. These legends of the Cheros and Kols are still preserved in [162] Bihar. The antiquities, forts and ruins in all parts of the district are by the present inhabitants universally ascribed to that ancient dynasty and primitive race.

In the account of Shahabad the same author states that "by far the most numerous monuments of antiquity in that district are attributed to the Cheros, to whom, it is universally admitted the whole country belonged in sovereignty ; the ancient name of the country was 'Kekata' (Kikata), and all the tract west of the Son retained that name, whilst the name of the country to the east formerly a part of Kekata was changed to Magadha."[13]

The Cheros of Kikata, like the Rajas of Chutia Nagpur, claim the honour of being descended from the great serpent who is King of Hell, that is to say, the Devil "which is considered a very ancient and honourable connection."

The Shahabad tradition regarding the expulsion of the Cheros is that they were conquered by the Savaras. That would be by a Dravidian tribe, and it may be that they were driven out by the irruption of the people from whom the Oraons and Rajmahali Paharias are descended, or by the Bhuiyas whom I also class as Dravidian and regard as identical with the tribe in Katak that are still called Suars or Savaras.

The Savaras ruled in Kikata after the expulsion of the Cheros, it is said, from 421 to 911 of the Salivahana, or A. D. 500 to 990, when their Raja Phudi Chandra was expelled by Jayadeva, a descendant of Bhoja Raja, or some say by Bhoja Raja himself, who founded Bhojpur and was the ancestor of the Bhojpur Rajas.[14]

The following passages from the *Rigveda*, quoted in Dr. Muir's *Original Sanskrit Texts* (vol. II, page 362), show that the Aryans had at a very early period come in contact with the people of Kikata.

"What are thy cows doing among the Kikatas ?[15] They yield no milk for oblations and they heat no fire." In the commentary it is explained that Kikata was a country inhabited by a people who were not Aryans, and the following lines are quoted from the *Bhagavata Purana*

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[12] Buchanan Hamilton. *Topography of Behar*.

[13] According to Colonel Wilford this change was made about the time of Jarasandhu, who, he says, was the first king of Magadha before denominated Kikata.—*Asiatic Researches*, vol. IX, page 91.

[14] Buchanan.

[15] The Kols do not use the milk of their cows,

(1, 3, 24) : 'Then when the Kali age has begun, a person named Buddha, son of Anjana, will be born among the Kikatas, in order to delude the Asuras.' The commentator explains "that is in the district of Gaya."[16] The Kikatas therefore were people who lived in Magadha or Bihar. The Dravidian people who are said to have expelled them from a portion of the country, are always called Siviras in the *Puranas*, and it is probable that the snake race, Cheros and Kols, to whom the antiquities are ascribed, were Kikatas.

The Kikatas according to the commentator Sayana being destitute of faith say "what fruit will result from sacrifices, claims or oblations ? rather eat and drink, for there is no other world but this"—a doctrine modern Kols decidedly subscribe to.

In his account of Gorakhpur, Buchanan Hamilton says, there are many Nagbangsis in that district now considered Rajputs and acknowledging the Raja of Chutia Nagpur as the head of the family. If this be so, these Nagbangsis are almost probably, as he is, of Kol extraction, *i.e.,* they are Mundari.

[163] It appears therefore that the Mundas, of whom I am now going to treat, were once located in Magadha, and were still there when Gautama was born, and it has been noticed that the Buddha Gaya sculptures portray not Aryan but Turanian or Kol features. The priests of Ceylon have a tradition, noticed by Captain Malony, that in Magadha where Gautama was born, the art of writing was unknown.[17] Buchanan says that the chief people, the Cheros, probably accepted his doctrine, whilst the lower orders, the Kols, rejected them, and whilst the Cheros became Aryanised, the Kols adhered to the life of freedom and impurity in which they are still found.

The Kols are according to these legends the earliest settlers in the Gangetic valley that we hear of ; and they had been long established there and had attained some advance in civilization, when they were dislodged, partly by the Savaras of the bards who carried their conquests beyond the Ganges and have left us the Kocch tribe that conquered Kamrup and are still lords of Kocch Bihar, the Rajmahal Highlanders, the Oraons, and the Bhuiyas, as the scattered remnants of the nation they founded.

Of the great Kol empire we have now no such remnants in the Bihar Division. The Chero chiefs, on being expelled from it, fell back into Palamau, whilst the chief seat of the Munda race is now the plateau of Chutia Nagpur.

The people I am now about to describe comprise the Mundaris or Mundas of Chutia Nagpur proper, the Bhumij of Manbhum, and the Larka Kols or Hos of Singbhum. These three divisions of the race would give us about 850,000 souls, thus—

Mundaris	400,000
Hos or Larkas	150,000
Bhumij	300,000
Total....	850,000

The Chutia Nagpur plateau is so connected with the great Vindhyan range, that it may be almost considered a part of it. It is, I believe, a portion of the country formerly known as the great Dandaka forest, and it was also called Jharkhand,[18] the forest tract, and when the Mundaris first appeared in it, was doubtless all covered with such grand *sal* timber as we still find in unreclaimed parts. It forms the heart of a territory in which the Mundaris have been settled for ages, and in which other tribes of the aborigines of India have found a secure asylum, retreating from all sides up the courses of the rivers that have their sources on the plateau. The conquered races ascended and found refuge from the common enemy in an elevated and beautiful region that i s itself a giganatic natural fortress.

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[16] Muir's *Original Sanskrit Texts*, vol. II, page 363.

[17] *Asiatic Researches*, Buchanan Hamilton,

The mean elevation of the plateau thus occupied is upwards of two thousand feet above the sea level. In the West, it rises to three thousand six hundred, and to the East and South, its lower steppe, from eight hundred to a thousand feet in elevation, comprises a great portion of the Manbhum and Singhbum Districts. Rivers flow from it in all directions forming grand water-falls as they bound from the upper plateau to the lower levels. The whole is about fourteen thousand square miles in extent.

[164] The central table land, on which the tribes rallied, is admirably adapted for defence. The approaches to it from the North, North-West, East, and South, are exceedingly precipitous, the paths winding up defiles which a handful of resolute men could hold agaiust hosts of invaders. The highlands in the Western and South-Western direction stretch into Sirguja and Jashpur, uniting with the Vindhyan mountains in a Western direction and the Satpura range to the South-West. They divide the waters of the Narbada and Mahanadi, forming a covered way by which fresh accessions of cognates strengthened the growing colonies of Kols on the 'Jharkhanda', and thus were founded the "strongholds of the ten chiefs" referred to in the *Puranas*, and in Colonel Wilford's essays, as the Dasarna, or ten forest forts east of the Son.[19]

These Jharkhand or Chutia Nagpur chiefs appear to have maintained those isolated and elevated defensive positions throughout the long series of Hindu dynasties, and came with an indifferent reputation under the Muhammadan Government, as in the report of the 'Select Committee' it is stated that the Birbhum District was conferred by "Jafar Khan on Asad-ulla Pathan, to guard against the incursions of the barbarous Hindus of Jharkhand." It is curious that they should be called Hindus, but the Muhammadans probably regarded as such all who were not of their own faith. Mr. J. Grant, 'Chief Serishtadar', writing of them in A.D. 1787, thus speaks of the country and its people. "This highland district, including Palamaw, Ramghur and Chutea Nagpur hath since the days of Ptolemy been geographically termed the three 'Bellads' or cantons in Arabic, and from which its modern appellation of Velayt may be a corruption if not derived from another root of the same language, modified to express a foreign dependent Government."[20]

"It is also generally described under the name of Kokera, more commonly called *Nagpore*, from the diamond mines of that place, as giving most importance to the whole country, making part of the same mountainous tract of land barren of every thing, except the most precious jewels in the world. Yet, perhaps, this portion of unfruitful country might be still more interestingly distinguished by delineating the character of its inhabitants who are undoubtedly an original savage race, differing extremely in appearance, religion, language, and manners, from the Hindu Lowlanders of Hindustan." (5th Report, vol. I, page 503).

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[18] In the ***Fifth Report of the Select Committee*** it is called Jharkhund, Chutea Nagpur, and Kukera. The latter is still the name of one of the Parganas. In the report it is said that it is called Nagpur from its diamond mines. The Raja has in his possession a diamond worth about Rs 40,000, the product of these now fabulous mines.

[19] ***Asiatic Researches***, vol. XIV, page 384. The Son or Soane River.

[20] But the three Vilayats refer to Bihar, Bengal, and Orissa ; not to Palamau, Chutia Nagpur, and Ramgarh.

From this it would certainly appear that Jharkhand has, to a comparatively recent period, been regarded by Hindus as out of the pale of Hindustan, occupied by a people who differed from them in religion, in customs, appearance and language.

I have never found much in Munda or Bhumij folklore that threw light on the early history of the race. The families that rank highest among them have lost such traditions in the hazy fables which Hindus have invented for them. The lower classes, as a rule, declare themselves to be autochthones, and even the chiefs found their claims to be of noble birth on miracles that took place in the country which they call their fatherland ; but in a manuscript account of the family of the Rajas of Chutia Nagpur I posses, it is stated that the Mundaris came to Jharkhand, afterwards called Chutia Nagpur, from Pipra and Paligarh, names that occur in the Santal traditions. It is also stated that the Mundas as well as the Oraons fought with the Lowrik Sumwara, no doubt the Lowrik [165] Sowrik of the Oraons, whom I suppose to have been *Sarawaks* or Jains and were worsted, and having to fly from their own country, they successively occupied Jaipur, Chitor, Simaliya, Ruhidas, and at last found themselves in Jharkhand. It is noticeable that the Ruhidas hills are said to have afforded a refuge, or temporary resting place, to the Kharwars, the Kharrias, the Mundaris and the Oraons, but whilst the Mundaris seldom speak of Ruhidas as a place they are interested in, I have often heard them speak of it as the place that the Oraons came from. It is not, however, improbable that several tribes of aborigines may have made a stand in the Ruhidas and Kaimur Hills at different times, before they were finally forced back into Palamau, Jharkhand, and the Vindhyan Hills.

The Mundaris say they had no Raja when they first took up the country, now called Chutia Nagpur. They formed a congeries of small confederate states. Each village had its chief also called a Munda, literally 'a head' in Sanskrit ; and as a village often consisted of one family, the inhabitants were all of Munda dignity, and hence it became a name for the whole tribe. What the original name for the tribe in their own language may have been, I do not know, but as the Mundaris on the plateau call themselves Konk Pat Munda, Konk or Konkpat may have been a national denomination. They appear to have only one word for ruler, the term 'Gumki', and they apply it to every one in authority. In the Manbhum District, the word Munda becomes 'Mura', which is also Sanskrit, and has the same meaning. As these Kols have taken up the word Munda, the Santals have appropriated the term 'Manjhi', and the Bhumij 'Sirdar.' The Mundari villages had each its staff of officers, and from the customs that still prevail in most old villages, the organization that has descended from very primitive times, appears to have been very complete.

I must now proceed to give the fable of the origin of the family of the Raja of Chutia Nagpur, as it is told in the family annals. We have already heard some thing of the snake race in connection with the 'Kikatas,' but the branch of the family established in Chutia Nagpur, whether it came from Kikata, or was produced in the country to which it gave that name, had its own version of the snake story.

Mythical origin of the Chutia Nagpur Rajas : It is well known that Raja Janamejaya, in revenge for the death of his father, compassed the destruction of the whole of the Nag or serpent race, and prepared a *yajna*, or great incantation service for the purpose; the total annihilation of the race was, however, prevented on the eve of its accomplishment by the interference of Astika Muni, and amongst those that were saved was the great Nag Pundarika.

In the 3044th year of the Kaliyuga, Pundarika Nag assumed the form of a Brahman, and repaired to the house of a certain Brahman of Benares, to perfect himself in a knowledge of the sacred books. The learned instructor became so pleased with his pupil, that he gave him to wife his only child, the beautiful Parvati ; but though Pundarika had the power to assume at pleasure any form, in the same way that our vulgar devil cannot get rid of his cloven foot and some say his tail, the Nag could not divest himself of his double tongue or his foul breath, and as it was of vital importance that his wife should not discover his real character, he always slept with his back to her. However one day, or night I should say, she managed to get round him, and found out his unpleasant peculiarities, and she interrogated him sharply as to the meaning of his being [166] thus different from the mortals of her acquaintance, and to divert her attention, he proposed they should make together a pilgrimage to Puri (Jagannath). To this she gave her assent, and delighted at the prospect of visiting that fashionable watering place, she forgot the unpleasant peculiarities of her husband, and cheerfully accomplished the pilgrimage. They returned through Jharkhand in which the Mundas and Orans were both then established, but on reaching the hill of Sutiamba, the time arrived for her being delivered of her first child, and when the pains seized her, she remembered the forked tongue and again eagerly sought for explanation.

There is even at the present day a current belief that a woman's curiosity at such moments must at all risks be gratified, and though the result of the announcement would be the immediate separation of the immortal Pundarika and his mortal wife, he felt himself bound to indulge her wishes, and after disclosing to her wondering ears his marvellous history, he plunged into a pool and disappeared from her sight.

Parvati was now inconsolable at the catastrophe she had brought about by her insatiable curiosity. In the midst of her grief and remorse her child was born, but instead of rejoicing at its birth, she prepared for herself a funeral pyre and became a 'Sati'.

At this juncture a Sakadwipa Brahman appears on the scene bearing an image the idol of the sun. He slaked his thirst at the pool, and when about to proceed on his journey, found he could not lift the idol that he had hitherto carried without difficulty, and whilst pondering on this, his eyes fell on a child lying sheltered and guarded by a great hooded snake. This was Pundarika in his proper form protecting his child. Addressing the Brahman, he narrated his own history and foretold that the child would become the Raja of the country to be called Nagpur, that the Brahman was to be his Purohit and the idol his tutelary deity. The boy, he said, was to be called Phani-Mukuta Raya, that is 'the snake crowned', and promising on his own part to return when his presence was necessary, he confided the child to the Brahman, and again plunged into the pool and disappeared.[21] It is in commemoration of this event that the Raja and chief members of the Nagbangsi family always wear turbans, so arranged as to make the head dress resemble a serpent coiled round the head with its head protruding over the wearer's brow. The seal of the Maharaja and arms of the family show as a crest a cobra with a human face under its expanded hood, surrounded by all the insignia of royalty.

Near Sutiamba dwelt Madura, who was Raja, or Manki, of one of the Parhas.[22] To his house the Brahman repaired with the infant, and the Manki was easily induced to take charge of the foundling and bring it up as his own child. He had a son of the same age, and when both the boys were twelve years old, Madura convened the Parha chiefs, and, it is said, the neighbouring Rajas, the Raja of Sirguja and the Ditya Raja, that is, the Raja of Patkum who claims descent from Vikramaditya, and it was agreed that Phani-Mukuta Raya should be proclaimed Raja of Chutia Nagpur.

The Oraons had at this time established themselves in the North-Western part of the plateau and were present at Phani-Mukuta Raya's inauguration as Raja. The next **[167]** event recorded is the marriage of the Snake Raja with a daughter of the Sikharbhum Raja, that is of the ancestor of the present Raja of Pachet. There was an awkward hitch when the Pachet Brahmans asked for Phani-Mukuta's pedigree, horoscope, and record of his birth, and the match would not have taken place, if Pundarika had not appeared and proved to the satisfaction of the ambassadors from Sikharbhum that the marriage proposed would be no misalliance. It is especially mentioned that the Mundas and Oraons all got drunk at the wedding and had a fight.

The "snake crowned" was acknowledged by all the Parha chiefs on the central plateau of Chutia Nagpur proper, but the inhabitants of the lower steppe would have nothing to do with him. They, however, followed the lead of the highland chiefs and elected Rajas of their own, all miraculously nurtured foundlings, and all through their representatives now claiming to be Rajputs. Thus have originated the Chiefs of what are called the five parganas of the Lohardagga District and most of the Manbhum zamindars. I only know one of them who has the sense to acknowledge his Mundari descent, but the conclusion that they are all of that race, is forced on us by their position, their fables of origin, and the fact that they all intermarry. Some have indeed made other alliances with good Hindu families, and owe to this an improved personal appearance in the present generation. I do not, however, suppose that all the Manbhum zamindars are Kols. Some few are Sudras, some are Bagdis, and the zamindars of the Northern Jungle mahals are all Bhuiyas.

The place pointed out as the scene of the birth of the first Nag Raja is Pithauria, a considerable market town on the Northern face of the plateau overlooking the valley of the Damudar in Pargana Sutiamba. Many Mundaris regard this part of the country as the cradle of the race, but it is not at present most densely populated by people of that tribe. The representatives of the Madura of the tradition are still to be found tenaciously clinging to the ancestral site and the graves of their forefathers, and, though simple peasants, enjoying considerable influence which they sustain by performing at the proper seasons the festivals that commemorate their former power. At all places in the Province of Chutia Nagpur that are, or have been, the head quarters of the sovereign or chief, a festival is annually solemnized in his honour called the 'Indparab'. Amidst great rejoicings an enormous umbrella, attached to the end of a mast some forty feet in length, is raised like a maypole by the united force of all the people that can be collected. At Sutiamba to the present day, two of these poles are annually set up, one in honour of Madura, the other to the Nagbangsi Raja, and the latter must not be moved from the ground till Madura's umbrella is well aloft.

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[21] According to the family annals, this occurred A.D. 104.

[22] And was also a chief of influence in the confederacy.

In support of the antiquity of the Nagbangsis of Chutia Nagpur there is collateral evidence in the annals[23] of the Kharonda dependencies of the Central Provinces. Jaggannath Deo, the last member of the Gangabangsi families who reigned there, finding himself without heirs, sent to Chutia Nagpur for a Nagbangsi who founded the present dynasty of Kharonda, 860 years ago.

The boy selected was a brother of the Satranjigarh chief. This was a collateral branch holding a maintenance grant, and it can be shown that many generations of Nagbangsi Rajas had passed away before this branch of the family took root.

[168] Unfortunately as those Rajas became great potentates among Hindus, they grew to despise the impure Kols, their subjects, and as the latter were not inclined to submit quietly to degradation and were not unmindful of what the Nagbangsis owed them, they revolted against such ingratitude, and the Rajas found it necessary to seek extraneous aid to control them. Foreigners were gradually introduced to whom lands were assigned for military services, who assisted or supported the Raja in the innovations he wished to introduce, and Brahmans were encouraged by grants of villages to settle in the country and to aid in civilizing it after their fashion. Their attempts at proselytising were not unsuccessful amongst the Mundaris. The chief men of that tribe were by degrees induced to see something very honorific and desirable in the distinction conferred by the *poita*, the thread indicating that the wearer is a Brahman or a Rajput, and without altogether jilting their ancient sylvan deities, they commenced paying their addresses to the new order of gods and goddesses that the Brahmans and their now Brahman-ridden Rajas were endeavoring to bring into fashion, but the change did not extend to the masses generally. They saw the encroachments on their rights and liberties that were threatened, and preferred the freedom of action and license they had hitherto enjoyed. The whole body of Oraons held steadily to this view, and thus while most of the chiefs in Nagpur and Manbhum adopted Brahmanical ideas, the Oraons and bulk of the Mundaris remained in their pristine state, and though intermarriage between the two peoples was not allowed, they otherwise harmoniously amalgamated as one nation.

The system of government that obtained among the Mundas and Oraons of Chutia Nagpur before their policy was disturbed by the conversion of their chief may still be discerned in their existing organisation. This country was divided into groups of twelve or more villages, called 'Parhas', each under a headman, who was generally called the 'Munda', and though not recognized by the authorities in the political divisions of the present time, the people still acknowledge the 'Parha' jurisdiction, and questions affecting their social relations are still adjusted in 'Parha' conclave.[24] Each village had besides its establishment of hereditary public servants, these still exist. The principal of these are the representatives of the most influential of the patriarchs. They originally formed the colony, and each is literally a pillar of the little state called 'Khunt'. The head of one of these Khunts or families is the chief or Munda, of another the Pahn, or priest, and there is sometimes a third called 'Mahato', the Munda's deputy.

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[23] *Selections, Records, Government of India*, No. 30, Report by Colonel Elliot.

[24] In the Kolhan of Singbhum, the Parha, or as it is there called the Pirhi, system is now fully maintained; but there and in some parts of Chutia Nagpur proper the head of a Parha is called a Manki.

The headmen had no superior rights in the lands cultivated by other villagers, they were not landlords but chiefs, and they and the people acknowledging them held the soil they cultivated in virtue of their being the heirs of those who first utilized it, and when it became necessary to distinguish such men from cultivators of inferior title, the former were called 'Bhuinhars', breakers of the soil.

This is not, perhaps, the only country where we find in the cultivators the actual descendants of a primitive people who first brought the land under cultivation, but I do not know where else to look for a people who having lived under different forms of government yet link themselves with a remote antiquity by the continuous and not unsuccessful struggle they have maintained to preserve in their integrity their prescriptive [169] rights. Against infringement of these the Kols have in all ages protested and sometimes fought, and though in numerous instances the force of circumstances has hopelessly transferred the proprietary right from the aborigines to the zamindar or his assign, many thousands have succeeded in retaining what has come down through their family from pre-historic times to a period when, under a law recently passed by the Bengal Government, these rights are being defined and registered, and they may look forward to their being transmitted in their integrity to their remotest posterity.

When the Mundaris and Oraons submitted to a Raja, and all were required to contribute to his maintenance, the people in each village were divided into two classes. The more privileged who retained the designation 'Bhuinhar', had to give honorary attendance and constituted the militia of the state. The remainder supplied food and raiment, and these obligations were eventually commuted to money payment or rent, and the lands cultivated by this class were called 'Rajhas', or rent-paying, in contradistinction to the 'Bhuinhari' which was no doubt originally rent-free. At a later period, the Raja was allowed to hold in each village a proportion of land called Manjihas, which was cultivated for his sole benefit ; and the persons who cultivated this land for him or his assigns had lands allotted to them, subject to no other service and no rent, called *beth kheta*. Besides the above, there were lands set apart for the expenses periodically incurred in the propitiation of the national and local deities, and the Kols thus provided against the dangers that threatened their gods from the impending changes of belief. The produce of the lands has never, that I am aware of, been appropriated to the service of the Hindu divinities, though the people contribute something yearly towards the public worship of 'Kali' inaugurated by the zamindars ; if, however, the villages were all to adopt a new religion, they would doubtless assert their right to devote the assets of what may be called their church lands to the service of the newly adopted faith.

The circumstances under which the Raja's ancestor rose to power precludes his making any division of the 'Raj'. It remains to this day an undivided estate, and the succession to it is regulated by local custom of primogeniture acknowledged under Regulation X of 1800 ; but as the families increased, the younger members or collateral branches were supported by maintenance grants, which lapse to the parent estate on failure of heirs male to grantee. These were among the earliest of the alienations which changed so greatly the relations between the chief and his people ; the latter had agreed to serve and support him, but they were now compelled to serve and support his assigns, and soon the assigns included not only relations but the Brahmans and mercenaries who received grants for religious or military services, and lastly foreign (all people not belonging to the province were so considered) farmers to whom leases of villages were given in supercession of the Kol headman.

Arrangements for Government made by the English : Chutia Nagpur, as part of Bihar, was ceded to the British Government in A.D. 1765 ;[25] but the earliest arrangement with the Raja of which I find any record occured in [170] A.D. 1772, when it is stated that the chief appeared before Captain Camac commanding a force in Palamau, and after exchange of turbans[26] with the Company's representative, duly acknowledged himself a vassal of that great power, gave as tribute Rs. 3,000 and agreed to do service against the Mahrattas. The oldest settlement deed is dated 1179 Fasli, by which Raja Dripnath Sahi of Khukhra, *alias* Nagpur, agreed to pay 12,000 rupees, viz., *mal* or rent 6,000 rupees, *nazranah* or tribute, 6,000. For some years after this, the Raja was allowed to administer the territory as the chief of a tributary mahal, but in 1816 or 1817, it was found necessary to deprive him of magisterial powers ; the estate was placed under the Magistrate of Ramgarh, who held Court alternately at Sherghati and Chatra. Natives of Bihar who were considered foreigners in Chutia Nagpur were sent into the country as Police officers, and occasionally the Nazir of the Ramgarh Magistrate's Court was deputed with extraordinary powers to inspect and report on the administration.

Upto A.D. 1831, when the most serious revolt of the Kols of Chutia Nagpur occurred, there can be no doubt that the changes of government which had taken place were not beneficial to them. They were neglected by their new masters, oppressed by aliens and deprived of the means they had formerly possessed of obtaining redress through their own chief. The Raja, by no means satisfied at his own loss of dignity and authority, gave but surly answers to complainants who came before him. The Darogahs (Native Police Officers), the highest resident officials under the British Government, declared it was not competent on them to decide on the grievances that then most harassed the Kols ; these were complaints, that they had been dispossessed by foreigners, Muhammadans, Sikhs, and others, who had obtained from the sub-proprietors farms of the Kol villages over the heads of the Kol headman ; but it often happened that the unfortunate Kol who with difficulty made his way to the far off station found the tables turned on him when he got there. A host of witnesses in the pay of the opposite party were already there prepared to prove "that he had not only no rights in the land, but was a turbulent rebel besides."

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[25] It is recorded in the *Akbarnamah* that about the year 993 A. H. (1585 A.D.), Madhu Singh, Zamindar of Kokrah, i.e., Chutia Nagpur, was forced to submit to Shahbaz Khan, one of Akbar's General, and a few years afterwards or in 1591, Madhu Singh and Lakhmi Rai of Kokrah served with the Emperor's army under Man Singh in effecting the conquest of Orissa. According to the local chronicle Madhu Singh, or as he is there called Madhukar Shah was the 43rd of the Nagbangsi line of Rajas ; but it is recorded in the same history that the 41st Raja Bairi Sal first submitted to Delhi, and his successor Durjun Sal failing to pay the tribute agreed upon, was attacked by Ibrahim Khan, taken prisoner, and carried to Delhi. This event is noted in the Memoirs of Jahangir, and took place in 1615 A.D.

[26] In regard to this exchange of turbans, the family annals tell a strange tale. In the Raja's turban were some very valuable diamonds, which it is insinuated had excited the cupidity of Captain Camac. The proposal for the exchange emanated, it is said, from him. He declared it was the English method of swearing eternal friendship, but the Captain had no diamonds in his head dress, and the Raja evidently concluded that he had been rather 'done' by the Company's Officer,

Major Roughsedge, the first Political Agent for the South-Western Frontier, notices a case of this kind that occurred in A.D. 1811. Some disturbances had broken out in Tamarh, and troops were sent there, but the officer in command reported that they arose entirely from the oppression practised by the Tamarh Raja on one of his vassals named Raghunath Singh, and on this the officer was allowed to enter into negotiation with the malcontents, who hoping for redress returned to their allegiance. In this hope Raghunath Singh went to the court then sitting at Chatra[27]. "The evidence kept in readiness against him by the Tamarh Zamindar caused his committal to the Court of Circuit, and the result was his condemnation to transportation or imprisonment for life."

Disturbances : For years after this event, Tamarh continued in a disorganized state, and in 1820, serious disturbances broke out, and two Kols, Rudu and Kantu, at the head of three hundred followers for a long time defied the **[171]** authorities, and were not reduced till military operations on an extensive scale were undertaken against them.

Insurrection, 1831-32 : The Kol insurrection of 1831, though no doubt only the bursting forth of a fire that had long been smouldering, was fanned into flame by the following little episode :—

The brother of the Maharaja and holder of one of the maintenance grants which comprised Sonpur, a *Pargana* in the Southern portion of the estate, gave farms of some of the villages over the heads of the Mankis and Mundas to certain Muhammadans, Sikhs, and others who had sought and obtained his favor. Twelve villages that had belonged to Singrai Manki were thus given to the Sikhs, and not only was the Manki dispossessed, but two of his sisters were seduced or ravished by these hated foreigners. A similar complaint was made against the Muhammadan farmers. One of them had acted very oppressively towards a Munda of Bandgaon in Singbhum and, it was said, had abducted and dishonored the Munda's wife. These men and some other Mankis of Sonpur who were equally dissatisfied invited all the Kols of Sonpur, Tamarh, and Bandgaon, to assemble at the village of Lankah in Tamrah. The meeting took place and the conveners addressed the assemblage. "The Pathans and the Singhs (Sikhs)," they said, "have dishonored us ; the Kunwar Harnath Singh has forcibly deprived us of our villages, which he has given to the Singhs. Our lives are no longer of value. We are all brethern, let us act together."

It was agreed that the wrongs inflicted on them could no longer be tolerated. They would at once "commence to burn, plunder, murder, and eat."[28]

This was no vain threat. A few days after the meeting, on the 11th December, 1831, a raid was made on the village of Kamrang held in farm by a Muhammad Ali Naik, and two hundred head of cattle carried off. On the 20th December, a number of villages bordering on Singbhum hled in farm by Hari Singh and Diyal Singh, Sikhs, were plundered and burned by a body of 700 Kols under Surga, the aggrieved Munda of Singbhum, Singrai Manki, and others, and one of the Sikhs was wounded. These villages formed part of the estate from which Singrai had been ejected. On the 25th December, several villages held in farm by Kali Khan and Saifullah Khan were plundered and burned, and one of the Khan's men was thrown into the fire. On the 2nd January, 1832, Kamrang was again attacked, and next day they sacked Jafar Ali's village and murdered him and ten of his people including the unfortunate Kol female whom he had seduced. The Nazir of the Sherghati court now appeared on the scene, and sent to the Kols to say that if they would desist from disturbing the peace of the country, their lands would be restored to them. They replied, they would attend to no orders but those that emanated from the Maharaja of Chutia Nagpur ; that they would not leave a single foreign farmer alive ; they would destroy every village in Sonpur Pargana, even Govindpur where Harnath Sahi resided, and then they would wash their weapons in the river Karo that flows by his house !

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[27] Letter from Major Roughsedge to the Magistrate of Ramgarh.

[28] Deposition of Singrai Manki.

In the meantime the arrows [29] of war were being circulated through the country like the fiery cross, and by the middle of January the Mundaris and Oraons had all entered [172] with zeal into the spirit of the insurrection. The country appears to have been entirely unprepared for such an event, troops there were none, the police stations were generally abandoned, and even the hereditary zamindars, connections of the Raja's, sought safety in flight. In every *pargana* the villages in which 'Sads' (Hindus) resided were destroyed, and all 'Dikos' (foreigners) who fell into the hands of the insurgents were murdered. The subordinate[30] Rajas of Rahe, Bundu, Tamarh; Barwa, though neither Sads nor Dikos, narrowly escaped with their lives, when those places were all sacked and destroyed.

With the exception of the force from Singbhum that came to the aid of the insurgents and were the most formidable division of the rebel army, it does not appear that the Kols in their work of destruction moved far from their own homesteads, as the 'Sad' portion of each village was plundered and burned by the Kols of that of neighbouring villages. The murders were most numerous in the Doisa and Korambe Parganas, as the 'Sads' there were unprepared for the attack, and none were spared that fell into the hands of the insurgents.

Troops to put down the insurrection were of course being collected from different points and were gradually being concentrated in the disturbed district ; but before military operations could be undertaken, the insurgents had done all that they had threatened to do and might, though it is not again mentioned, have washed their weapons in the Karo and retired. Captain (the late Sir Thomas) Wilkinson reached Pithauria, which as I have already stated is on the brink of the northern face of the plateau, about the middle of January, and the work of incendiarism was then in full blaze.

Captain Wilkinson was without sufficient force to penetrate far into the disturbed districts, but he lost no time in compelling the villages near Pithauria to submit. This was not done without fighting, and, indeed, the insurgents on more than one occasion threatened his position, advancing against it with a force estimated at about 3,000 fighting men, but they apear to have been easily repulsed. The inhabitants of the large village of Nagri between Ranchi and Pithauria had been particularly active in the work of destruction, and have avowed their determination to fight to the last ; but an expedition was sent specially against them with the unequivocal instructions "attack, slay and destroy," and to such orders energetically carried out, the Nagri heroes speedily succumbed. This is a very primitive Oraon village which up to the present time retains all the old institutions; the bachelors hall with the banners, yak's tails, trumpets, drums, and the dancing arena in front where often songs are sung that remind the young men how their fathers 'went out' in 1832. The subjugation of Nagri was followed by the submission of most of the northern villages, but the Oraons of the west and Mundaris of the centre and the south showed no inclination to lay down their arms, and the insurrection now spread into Palamau where it was taken up by Kharwars, merely it would seem for the love of the thing. It grew serious, however, and a squadron of cavalry making its way to Chutia Nagpur through that *pargana* found itself so hotly opposed in one of the hill passes, that the officer in command deemed it necessary to make a retrogade movement and await reinforcements.

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[29] An arrow passed from village to village is the summons to arm, and sent to any one in authority it is an open declaration of war. The Hos of the Bhor Pir in Singbhum thus avowed their intention to espouse the cause of the dethroned Raja of Porahat in 1857, and summoned their brethern.

[30] Lal Jitnath Sahi of Ginjo and Kapilnath of Salgi are prominently noticed as honorable exceptions. They held to their respective villages, and repulsed several attacks made on them.

[173] Not till the middle of February were the troops in a position to operate on a scale adequate to the occasion. Then three columns were formed to start simultaneously from three points [31] in the northern part of the plateau, and sweep the country in parallell lines as they moved from north to south.

The right and centre columns met with little opposition, the heads of villages submitting as they advanced, but the left column when they reached Sonpur found that the Kols had abandoned their villages, and with their flocks and herds and families had taken refuge in the hills. In attempting to dislodge them, the troops ,especially a detachment of the 3rd Light Cavalry, suffered some loss. The columns, however, were now concentrated in the south. Bindrai Manki, Singrai's brother, and Surga, the heroes of the episode, held out to the last, but on the 19th March, 1832, these leaders came into camp and surrendered to the Commissioner, the remaining *sirdars* all then tendered their submission, and the insurrection was at an end.

Great changes in the administration followed this insurrection. The disturbed districts and jungle mahals with the dependent tributary mahals were organized as a non-regulation province under the name of the South-Western Frontier Agency; the system of zamindari police, under which authority was restored to the chiefs to whom the people had been accustomed to look for its exercise, was established in Chutia Nagpur ; the border Mankis whose dispossession from their tenures was the main cause of the insurrection, were reinstated, and the zamindars were deprived of the power of ousting them without the orders of the European officer now placed at the head of the district. They obtained title deeds constituting them *ghatwals*, or guardians of the passes, and officers of police, and that position they still hold.

The Bhumij : The insurrection of Chutia Nagpur and Palamau was speedily followed by disturbances in the southern portion of the Manbhum District in which the Bhumij Kols were the chief actors.

Near the boundary of Chutia Nagpur, the term Bhumij as applied to this class is seldom used. The Kols who form the bulk of the population call themselves Mundas or, as the name is usually pronounced in Manbhum, Muras. The title Bhumij, 'the children of the soil,' is given to the members of the tribe settled further east; but, generally, if asked to what class or caste they belong, they say 'Sirdar.' In Dhalbhum the Bhumij call themselves, and are called by the Singbhum Kols, 'Matkum.'

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[31] Tiko, Churia, Pithauria.

Geographical Distribution : The Bhumij are, no doubt, the original inhabitants of Dhalbhum, Barabhum, Patkum, Bagmundi, and still form the bulk of the population in those and adjoining estates. They may be described roughly as being chiefly located in the country between the Kasai and Subarnarekha rivers. They had formerly large settlements to the north of the former river, but they were dislodged by Aryans, who as Hindus of the Kurmi caste now occupy their old village sites. The Bhumij have no traditions of their own origin, generally asserting that they were produced where they are found ; but some who dwell in the vicinity of old Jain temples declare that the founders of the temples preceded them ; though they can tell us nothing of those founders, nor of the architects of the ruined and deserted Hindu temples existing as additional marks of a prior occupation of the country by a more civilized people.

[174] I have elsewhere[32] noted that these Bhumij were probably the 'Vajra Bhumi' (the terrible indigenes) who are described as abusing, beating, shooting arrows at, and baiting with dogs, the great Saint Vira, the twenty-fourth Jina or Tirthankara of the Jains, an account of whom will be found in Volume IX of the *Asiatic Researches*.

Chuars : The Bhumij of the Jungle Mahals were once, under the nick-name 'Chuar,' the terror of the surrounding districts, and their various outbreaks were called 'Chuaris.' On several occasions since they came under the British rule, they have shown how readily a Chuari may be improvised on very slight provocation. I do not know that on any occasion they rose like the Mundaris simply to redress their own wrongs. It was sometimes in support of a turbulent chief ambitious of obtaining power to which according to the courts of law he was not entitled, and it was sometimes to oppose the Government in a policy that they did not approve, though they may have had very little personal interest in the matter.

Recent Disturbances : Thus in the year A.D. 1798, when the Pachet estate was sold for arrears of revenue they rose and violently disturbed the peace of the country till the sale was cancelled. After hostilities had continued for some time, in reply to a very pacific message sent to them by the officer commanding the force, they asked if the Government were going to sell any more estates ?

I do not think that the settlement of any one of the Bhumij Jungle Mahals was effected without a fight. In Dhalbhum the Raja resisted the interference of the British power, and the Government set up a rival, but after various failures to establish his authority, they set him aside and made terms with the rebel. In Barahbhum, there was at one time a disputed succession. The courts decided that the eldest born of Raja Vivika Narain, though the son of the second wife, should succeed in preference to the son of the first wife, the Pat Rani. The Bhumij did not approve of the decision, and it was found necessary to send a military force to carry it out. This was the origin of the last disturbance known as Ganga Narain's rebellion, which broke out in 1832.[33]

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[32] *Journal, Asiatic Society, Bengal*, for 1866, p. 186, Note on Manbhum.

[33] Decisions of the law courts in succession cases have on other occasions been the cause of disturbances in the Jungle and Tributary Mahals. The last affair of the kind was in 1868, when the Hill Bhuiyas of Keonjhur revolted against their present chief on the ground that he was not of pure blood or born in lawful wedlock. In determining what the local custom is in such cases, the views of the people should always be ascertained.

Lakhman, the son of the Pat Rani alluded to above, continuing to oppose his brother, was arrested, and died in Jail leaving a son Ganga Narain.

On the death of Raja Raghunath Singh, he also was succeeded by the son of his second Rani, who was declared by the Sudder Court to be heir in opposition to a claim again set up by Madhab Singh, the younger son, but the son of the Pat Rani ; but failing in his suit, Madhab Singh resigned himself to his fate and was consoled by being appointed *diwan*, or prime minister, to his brother. In this capacity he made himself thoroughly unpopular, more especially by becoming an usurious money-lender and extortionate grain-dealer, and soon Ganga Narain found that in opposing a man so detested, a majority of the people would side with him. Accordingly in the month of April 1832, he, at the head of a large force of *ghatwals*, made an attack on Madhab Singh and slew him. This foul crime was committed with great deliberation, cunning, and cruelty. Madhab was seized and carried off to the hills to be sacrificed. Ganga Narain himself first smote him with his battle axe, then each Sirdar Ghatwal was compelled **[175]** to discharge an arrow at him, and thus all the leading Ghatwals became implicated in the plot. A system of plundering was then commenced, which soon drew to his standard all the 'chuars,' that is all the Bhumij of Barahbhum and adjoining estates. He attacked Barahbazar where the Raja lived, burned the Munsiff's (Native Civil Judge) *cutcherry* and the police station from which the police had fled, but three unfortunate peons (runners) of the Munsiff's Court were caught and killed.

The officials and police fell back on Bardwan, and for some time Ganga Narain had the country at his mercy ; and he sacked every place worth plundering ; but in November following a force was collected, consisting of three regiments of Native infantry and eight guns, and military operations against the insurgents commenced. They were soon driven to take refuge in the hills, but being pressed there also, Ganga Narain fled into Singbhum and endeavoured to enlist in his favor the reputed invincible and irrepressible Larkas ; they were just then at issue with one of the chiefs who claimed supremacy over a portion of them, the Thakur of Kharsawan, and though they were not unwilling to join in the row, they wished before they committed themselves to Ganga Narain's leadership to test his capacity to lead. They, therefore, demanded that he should, in the first place, make an attack on the fort of the Thakur of Kharsawan. In complying with this request he was killed, and the Thakur had the pleasure of sending his head to Captain Wilkinson, with a letter quite in the style of Falstaff when after the battle near Shrewsbury, he said, "there is Percy. If your father will do me any honor so ; if not, let him kill the next Percy himself. I look to be either Earl or Duke, I can assure you."

Traditions : I have not been able to discover that the Bhumij possess any independent traditions of migrations. Those who live in proximity to Chutia Nagpur recognise no distinction between themselves and the Mundas. They intermarry and associate and coalesce in all matters indicating identity of race, for, though it may be said that they are not much troubled with caste prejudices, there is no portion of the old Indian population which is quite free from it. The Bhumij further east have become too Hinduized to acknowledge the relationship. The Dhalbhum Bhumij consider themselves autochthones, and will not admit that they are in any way connected with the Mundas, Hos, or Santals. It is pretty certain that the zamindars of all these estates are of the same race as their people, though the only man among them whom I found sensible enough to acknowledge this was the Raja of Bagmundi ; the others all call themselves Kshatryas or Rajputs, but they are not acknowledged as such by any true scion of the illustrious stock. In claiming to be Rajputs they do not attempt to connect themselves with any of the recognized families of the tribe, but each family has its own special legend of miraculous production.

The family legend of the Raja of Barahbhum may be given as a specimen of their skill in making pedigrees.

Legend of the Barahbhum family : Nath Varaha and Kesvaraha, two brothers; quarrelled with their father, the Raja of Virat, and settled in the court of Vikramaditya. (This has some connection with the tradition of the adjoining estate Patkum, the Raja of which claims descent from Vikramaditya). Kes the younger was sawn into two pieces, and with his blood Vikram gave a *tika*[34] to the eldest and a pair of **[176]** umbrellas, and told him that all the country he could ride round in a day and night should be his. Nath mounted his steed and accomplished a circuit of eight *yojanas*, whatever that may be, within the time specified, and a precious stiff line of country he took in riding round what is now Barahbhum, but it must be all true as the print of his horse's hoofs are still visible on the southern slopes of the hills.

With one or two exceptions all the Ghatwals (captains of the border and their men) of the Bhumij-part of the Manbhum and Singbhum Districts are Bhumij, this is a sure indication of their being the earliest settlers. They were the people (like the Mundari Bhuinhars in Chutia Nagpur, the Bhuiyas in Bonai, Gangpur, Keonjhur, &c., Gonds in Sirguja and Udaipur) to whom the defence of the country was entrusted. The Bhumij Ghatwals in Manbhum have now after all their escapades settled down steadily to work as guardians of the peace.

Dhalbhum : The Raja of the extensive zamindari of Dhalbhum is no doubt of Bhumij extraction, but for him the Herald's college of the period failed to manipulate a Rajput descent. His ancestor was a washerman, who afforded refuge to the Goddess Kali when, as Rankini, she fled from a demon in Pachet. The Goddess, in gratitude, gave the washerman a young Brahmani, a ward of her own, to wife, and the Rajas of Dhalbhum are the descendants of this union. The origin of the story appears to be that a Bhumij chief of Dhalbhum, probably, at the instigation of a Brahman stole from its shrine in Pachet an image of Rankini and set it up as his own tutelary deity. The shrine from which the image was abstracted is shown at the village of Para near Parulia in Manbhum, and it became the popular object of worship in Dhalbhum by all classes of the people there. Rankini especially rejoiced in human sacrifices. It is freely admitted that in former years children were frequently kidnapped and sacrificed at her shrine, and it cannot be very positively asserted that the practice of offering such victims has long been discontinued.

At the shrine of this goddess a very cruel scene was enacted every year till 1865, when with the concurrence of the zamindar it was put a stop to. It was called the 'Bindaparab' and Ganga Narain probably had it in his mind when he so cruelly disposed of Madhab Singh.

Bindaparab : At this *parab* two male buffaloes are driven into a small enclosure, and on a raised stage adjoining and overlooking it, the Raja and suit take up their position. After some ceremonies the Raja and his Purohit[35] discharge arrows at the buffaloes, others follow their example, and the tormented and enraged beasts fall to and gore each other whilst arrow after arrow is discharged. When the animals are past doing very much mischief, the people rush in and hack at them with battle axes till they are dead. The Santals and wild Kharrias, it is said, took great delight in this festival, but I have not heard a murmur at its discontinuance, and this shows it had no great hold on the minds of the people.

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[34] Mark on the forehead.

[35] Family priest.

Tenures : Many of the Bhumij tribe are well off. Some of them who are Sirdar Ghatwals are in virtue of their office proprietors of estates comprising each from one to twenty manors, but as the most substantial tenants under them are also hereditary Ghatwals, rendering service and paying besides but a **[177]** very low fixed rent, these Ghatwali estates are not so valuable to the proprietor as villages on the ordinary tenure wouldbe.

The Bhumij live in commodious, well-built houses, and have about them all the comforts to which the better class of cultivators in Bengal are accustomed. Those who live quite amongst the Bengalis have retained very few of their ancient customs ; none perhaps, except the great national amusement, the gay meetings for dance and song both at their villages and at *yatras*, which are characteristic of all Kols.

Physical traits : In appearance they are inferior to the Hos of Singbhum and to the best of the Mundas of Chutia Nagpur. They are short of stature but strongly built, and like the Santals rather inclined to fleshiness. In complexion they are variable, like the Mundas ranging from a dark chocolate to a light brown color ; they observe many of the Hindu festivals but retain their sacred groves in which they still sacrifice to the old gods. They have generally left off eating cow's flesh in which their unreformed brethren in Singbhum and Chutia Nagpur indulge, but eat fowls.

The Bhumij have, in a great degree, lost the simplicity and truthfulness of character for which their cognates are generally distinguished. They have acquired from the Bengali Hindus the propensity to lie, but they have not the same assurance or powers of invention, and their lies are so transparent, that they are easily detected.

Mr. Ball of the Geological Survey informs me that he found in the Bhumij country of Dhalbhum some remains of an ancient settlement which was said to have been the abode of a Raja who had two tongues. This is the only tradition I have heard directly connecting the Bhumij with the snake race, the Nagbangsi,[36] but it is an independent testimony to the wide-spread influence of that mysterious people.

In the religion of the Kols there are no traces of snake worship, if it be not hidden in their name for the rainbow 'Lurbeng', which means 'a serpant'. I have noticed, however, the occurrence in Chutia Nagpur of people apparently allied to the Kols who call themselves Nagbangsis, though not allied to the Nagbangsi family of Chutia Nagpur, and the Nagesars, also called Kisans, and among the old sculptures that are found in the country are images of serpents or snakes which must have been intended for altar pieces.

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[36] Who, till they became mortals, had forked tongues like serpents.

SECTION 4

THE HO OR LARKA KOLS

Geographical Distribution : The district of Singbhum in which the Ho or Larka Kols are located lies to the south-east of Chutia Nagpur proper, or between 22° and 23° of north latitude, and 86° 53′ and 85° 2′ of east longitude. It measures 124 miles in extreme length from east to west, and 64 miles in its greatest breadth from north to south. The total area is by survey 4503 square miles ; of this 1905 square miles constitute the exclusively Ho territory known as the Kolhan. The most fertile and highly cultivated portion of this tract surrounds the station of Chaibasa at a general level of seven hundred and fifty feet above the sea, and here are massed about two-thirds of the Kolhan population. To the south of this extending to the Baitarni river, the general level rises to upwards of 1000 feet, and the Kols of this plateau are less civilized and more turbulent than those of the lower **[178]** steppe. The whole district is undulating, traversed by dykes of trap which rise in rugged masses of broken-up rock, and the views are on all sides bounded by ranges of hills rising to 2900 feet. To the south-west bordering on Chutia Nagpur is a moutainous tract of vast extent sparsely inhabited by the wildest of the Kols ; this, however, appears to be the region from which they first descended into the Singbhum plains. Saranda bordering on Gangpur at the extreme south-west of the district is called 'Saranda of the seven hundred hills'. It is a mass of mountains which rise to the height of 3500 feet, and contains but a few poor hamlets nestled in deep valleys belonging for the most part to a very unreclaimed tribe of Kols. The inhabitants of the western hills bordering on Chutia Nagpur generally retain the name of Mundas, and connect themselves rather with the people of Chutia Nagpur than with the Hos of Singbhum.

Traditions : The Hos appear to have no traditions of origin or migrations that throw much light on their history. They generally admit that they are of the same family as the Mundas, and that they came from Chutia Nagpur. The Oraons sometimes say that the exodus of the Hos was caused by *their* invasion, but I cannot believe that the Hos could ever have given way to so inferior a race, and the tradition usually received is that the Oraons made friends with the Mundas and were allowed to occupy peaceably the north-western corner of the plateau where the former apparently had never taken root. The Hos are the only branch of the Kols that have preserved a national apellation. The Mundas of Chutia Nagpur are sometimes called Kokpat[37], or Konkpat Mundas, and that may be a national word, but 'Ho', 'Hore' or 'Horo', means in their own language 'man', and they are not the only people that apply to themselves exclusively the word used in their language to distinguish human being from brutes. They probably left Chutia Nagpur before their brethren there had assumed the Sanskrit word Munda as their distinctive name, taking with them their old constitution of confederate village communities under hereditary head men, which system they have retained to the present day ; but they did not find in Singbhum an unoccupied country. It is admitted on all sides that one part of it was in possession of the Bhuiyas and another held by the people who have left many monuments of their ingenuity and piety in the adjoining district of Manbhum, and who were certainly the earliest Aryan settlers in this part of India, the 'Sarawaks' or 'Jains'. The former were driven from their possessions in what is now the Kolhan, and fell back into Porahat. What became of the Jains we know not, they have left their marks in Dhalbhum and the eastern and north-eastern quarters of the district ; and it is not improbable that the Sudras, Goalas and Kurmis now settled in Porahat, Kharsawan, Saraikela and Dhalbhum may be remnants of the colonies they founded, but it is also probable that many were absorbed into the family that conquered them, and this may account for the greater beauty of the Hos as compared with other Kols, and for their having in use a number of common vocables of Sanskrit origin, though they insulated themselves as much as possible, despised the Hindus, and for a long time had little or no intercourse with them.

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[37] Perhaps the name sometimes given to the country 'Kokera' may have some connection with Kokpat.

Mines : A very intelligent observer, Mr. Ball of the Geological Survey, informs me that local tradition ascribes to the Jains all the copper mining works, the traces of which are seen in Saraikela and Dhalbhum. The present population know nothing of the art, but the Jains appear **[179]** to have fully understood it, and English speculators have found to their cost that the operations of the old miners were thoroughly exhaustive.

Fmaily Legends : It is probable that the chief who was called Raja of Singbhum and his brethren were originally more intimately connected with the Dravidian Bhuiya tribe than with the other races that make up the score of the population. The military force on which the Raja chiefly depended were Bhuiyas ; his tutelary deity, the Pawri Devi,[38] was a Bhuiya divinity, corresponding with the Thakurani Mai of the Keonjhur Bhuiyas ; and the tradition regarding the founder of this family is that he was as a boy discovered in a hollow tree which a Bhuiya forester was cutting down. But the Singh family legend is somewhat different. They claim to be, and are by noble families now admitted to be, Kshatryas of true blood. Their ancestor came as a knight-errant from Marwar, a very Jain country now, whatever it may have been in those days, and was adopted by the Bhuiyas ; but a dispute subsequently arose between the Singhs and the Bhuiyas, the former coalesced with the Kols ; and when with their assistance they had put down the Bhuiya revolt, they claimed supremacy over both tribes.

According to the annals fabricated by Brahmans in glorification of the Singh family, the Hos first appeared in Singbhum as a part of a marriage procession '*barat*' with a bride from Nagpur for the Singh Raja, but however they came, they obtained possession of the best part of the country and have never yielded an inch of the territory they then appropriated. Ethnologically their position is singular and interesting ; speaking themselves the Kol language only, they occupy a basin whose barrier of hills restrains the flow and blending together of the three great Sanskrit derivatives Hindi, Bengali, and Uriya, which but for this obstacle of an insulated language would have found a trijunction boundary point in the centre of Singbhum. It is generally supposed that that name was given to the country from the patronymic of the chiefs, but without propounding anything very extravagant, it is just as likely that it is derived from their name for God, the Creator, Singbonga.

Intercourse wth the British Government : The Singbhum Rajput chiefs have been known to the officers of the British Government since A.D. 1803. In that year, the Marquis

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[38] A corruption of Pahaṛi Devi, 'the Hill Goddess'.

Wellesley, Governor-General, caused friendly communications to be addressed to Kunwar Abhiram Singh, ancestor of the present Raja of Saraikela, in regard to the assistance he was invited to render and which he promised to render in the prosecution of the war against Maharaja Raghoji Bhonsla. The Kunwar is assured that the British Government will always respect his rights to hold his territory free of rent. In no treaty that I have ever seen is there any mention of a cession of Singbhum. The Saraikela chief was communicated with, because his territory adjoined the Jungle Mahals then under the Company ; but between British officials and the people of the Kolhan there does not appear to have been any intercourse previous to the year 1819. Of the interior of their country, for years after the acquisition of all the surrounding districts, nothing whatever was known. The Hos would allow no strangers to settle in or even to pass through the Kolhan, and pilgrims to Jagannath had to make a circuit of several days journey to avoid it. In March 1819, the Political [180] Agent, Major Roughsedge, directed his Assistant to proceed to Porahat to negotiate a settlement with its chief, who as the head of this family of chiefs was called Raja of Singbhum. The officer was instructed to collect all possible information regarding the country, and "*especially of the extraordinary race called Larkas.*" The Assistant, however, did not succeed in penetrating so far into the interior as to come in contact with them. Writing of them in the following year, Major Roughsedge says, "The Raja and Zamindars of Singbhum who are in attendance on me have so formidable an opinion of the power and ferocity of these savages that, notwithstanding the considerable force under my command, they are evidently much alarmed, and have made a formal protest against the danger of the march."

Attempts to subjugate them : The chiefs who thus trembled at the thought of penetrating into the country of the Larkas were at that time pressing on the Agent their claims to supremacy in the Kolhan, and asserting that the Kols were their subjects in rebellion, urging our Government to attack them and force them to return to thir allegiance ; but they admitted that for more than fifty years they had been unable to exercise any control over them, and it really appears quite an open question whether the Kols were ever really subjects to them or not. Old Kols have told me that they honored and respected the Singh chiefs, but regarded them till they quarrelled rather as friends and *allies* than as rulers ; but if they ever were subjects, they had achieved their liberty in various hard-fought fields, and their autonomy might have been respected. Three formidable but abortive attempts to subjugate them are noted in Major Roughsedge's dispatches, one made by Dripnath Sahi, the grandfather of the present Raja of Chutia Nagpur at the head of more than 20,000 men assisted by the troops of the Raja of Singbhum ; the second by Raja Jagannath Sahi of Chutia Nagpur with almost an equal force in A.D. 1770, and a third in 1800, an invasion from the Mohurbhanj (Mayurbhanj) side headed by a Gond chief called the Mahapter of Bamanghati. On the first of these occasions the Larkas drove the Nagpur men out of Singbhum with immense slaughter. The scene of the second battle, the centre of an extensive and elevated plain, was pointed out to Major Roughsedge by an eye witness, who told him that the action was fought at noon-day in the month of May, when the heat must have been frightful. The Raja's troops succumbed to the first onslaught of the Larkas, many hundreds were slaughtered on the battle field, and many more were killed or died from thirst in the retreat, the Larkas pursuing them for ten miles till the fugitives had surmounted the steep ascent into their own country.

It appears that after these attacks on their independence, the Larkas retaliated on all the border villages of neighbouring states. Sonpur, Belsia, and Basia, in Chutia Nagpur, were ravaged by them for several years and whole villages depopulated, They also laid waste the adjoining portion of Gangpur, Bonai, Keonjhur, and Mohurbhanj, but some of the raids on the Southern districts, were undoubtedly instigated by the Singbhum Raja. It was usual indeed for these chiefs, when they wished to annoy a neighbour, to incite the Kols to make a raid on him, and these were, I think, the only invitations of the Singbhum chiefs that they ever attended to. Whenever there was a row, they eagerly entered into it, and all malcontents invariably sought their assistance.

Major Roughsedge was particularly struck with the fine physique and manly independent bearing of the men of the first deputation that waited on him. They entered [181] his tent, and after admiring it a little, it suddenly occurred to them that it was a convenient place for a siesta, so stretching themselves at full length on the carpets, they coolly composed themselves to sleep ! Of their appearance he says they were as much superior in size and form to their brethren of Chutia Nagpur "as wild buffaloes to the village herds."

Major Roughsedge at the head of his battalion of Artillery Cavalry, and Infantry entered their country with the avowed object of compelling them to submit to the Rajas who claimed their allegiance, but he did his best to conciliate them and was at first in hopes he had succeeded, but apparently they had made up their minds to employ against him the tactics which had been so successful in their encounters with the Nagpur armies. He was allowed to advance unmolested into the heart of their territory and to take up a position among their finest villages, at Chaibasa on the Roro River, near the present station of that name. Here some camp followers were, in sight of the camp, attacked by a body of armed Larkas, one killed and others wounded, and the Larkas, after this feat, were seen moving away in the direction of the hills, but the pickets and a troop of cavalry under command of Lieutenant Maitland, were sent out to intercept them. The result I will give, nearly in Major Roughsedge's own words. Lieutenant Maitland making a sweep so as to cut off the retreat of the Larka party, they at once assailed him with a flight of arrows, but finding they made no impression with these weapons, "these savages, with a degree of rashness and hardihood scarcely credible, met the charge of the troop half way in an open plain, battle axe in hand." The result was of course a terrible slaughter of the unfortunate Kols, not more than half the party effecting their escape to the hills.

"Lieutenant Maitland now moved rapidly towards the village where the grass cutter had been killed and found standing near the corpse and prepared for action, a second party of 60 men who behaved with still greater desperation, rushing at the troop and striking like furies at both horses and men until the whole were sabred. They directed their attack chiefly at the horses killing two and wounding several ; only two *suwars* were wounded."

That evening Major Roughsedge found his rear threatned and mails intercepted, and sent a strong party out next day to attack a body of Larkas assembled in arms at the village of Gutialor. Lieutenant Maitland, the officer in command, found a host in arms ready to oppose him, and on approaching the village was received with repeated discharges of arrows, which caused him considerable loss. To drive them from the shelter afforded by the enclosures he set fire to the village, but still there was an obstinate resistance and numbers were slaughtered before they could be induced to lay down their arms and accept quarter. The officer himself narrowly escaped death in a personal conflict with a Larka.

In the above and other encounters the Larkas suffered greatly ; the conclusion dawned on them that they were no longer invincible and to avoid further devastation of their villages, the whole of the Northern Pirs submitted and entered into engagements to acknowledge and pay tribute to the Raja of Singbhum. But Major Roughsedge had yet to meet the still fiercer Kols of the Southern Pirs and in his progress towards Sambhalpur he had to fight every inch of his way out of Singbhum leaving them unsubdued. On his quitting the district, a war broke out between the Larkas who had [182] submitted and those who had not. One hundred well-armed Hindustani irregulars under a Native Officer were sent by the Agent to the support of the Raja and his allies of the Northern Pirs, and this for a time gave them the advantage, but the Subadar, having been unfortunately induced to enter the Kolhan to assist in levying a contribution, was attacked and he and most of his party cut up. The Kols then advanced on a small fort, in which the remainder of the Hindustanis sought shelter ; they were driven out of the enclosure and in their retreat twelve were killed and ten wounded.

After this the Kols ravaged the best part of the Singbhum Raja's estate and threatened Saraikela and the chiefs ; who all again implored the assistance of the Agent against their Kol subjects !

In 1821, a large force was employed to reduce the Larkas, and after a month's hostilities the leaders, encouraged by a proclamation, surrendered. They earnestly prayed at this time to be taken under the direct management of the British Officers, but unfortunately their wishes were not complied with. They were compelled to enter into agreements to pay tribute to the chiefs at the rate of eight annas for each plough ; but after a year or two of peace, they again became restive and resumed their old practices of pillage and plunder, committing raids and laying waste neighbouring villages, not unfrequently, however, at the instigation of the chiefs. Other matters then engaged the attention of the authorities, and for many years no attempt was made to restore order to Singbhum, or seriously to check the predatory predilections of its turbulent inhabitants. This encouraged them to extened the circle of their depredations ; they ravaged Dhalbhum, devastated Bamanghati and penetrated far into Chutia Nagpur, but the assistance rendered by them to the Nagpur Kols in 1831-32, was too gross a defiance of the Government to escape the serious notice of the authorities.

The judicious officer who was now Agent to the Governor-General for the newly formed non-regulation Province the South-Western Frontier, the late Sir Thomas Wilkinson, at once recognised the necessity of a thorough subjugation of the Kols and the impolicy and futility of forcing them to submit to the chiefs. He, therefore, proposed an occupation of Singbhum by an adequate force, and when the people were throughly subdued, to place them under the direct management of a British officer to be stationed at Chaibasa in the heart of their country. These views were accepted by Government, and in furtherance of them two regiments of Native Infantry, a brigade of guns and the Ramgarh battalian, the whole force commanded by Colonel Richards, entered Singbhum in November, 1836. Operations were immediately commenced against the refractory Pirs, and by the end of February following all the Mankis and Mundas had submitted. There appears to have been very little actual fighting during this campaign. All the most important parts of the Kolhan were visited by the Agent and his troops, the men whom it appeared desirable to make examples of in consequence of their having been leaders in the previous lawless proceedings were given up or captured, and the others readily acquiesced in the arrangements proposed.

Their Submission : Engagements were now taken from them to bear true allegiance to the British Government, and it was deemed necessary to stipulate that they should no longer obey the orders of the chiefs to whom they had previously been required to submit. Six hundred and twenty villages, with a population estimated at the time at 90,000, of whom two-thirds were Larkas or Hos, were thus [183] brought, and have since remained, under the immediate control of the British Government, and simple rules for the administration of this new acquisition, which in all their salient and peculiar features are still in force, were drawn up and promulgated.

The system of Government through heads of Pirs and heads of villages found to exist was maintained. The former officers had under them from three to a dozen villages. They were recognised as the head police officers of their circle and the collectors of the Government dues, and were empowered to dispose of petty disputes of a civil or criminal nature, but were not authorized to inflict any punishment. The Munda excercised authority in his village as Police officer subordinate to the Manki, the Pir officer, and assisted in collecting the revenue. The assessment at eight annas for each plough, imposed by Major Roughsedge, was continued, and under it the rental was about Rs. 5,000. In 1854, an assessment on the same principle but double the former rates was introduced ; this gave Rs. 17,700 which was fixed for twelve years.

During this period the revenue was paid with the utmost punctuality. The area of cultivation rapidly increased, and there was every reason to suppose that the people were contented and making fair progress in civilization and prosperity ; but in 1857 the disturbances that supervened on the mutinies caused a serious but brief check.

In that year the detachment of the Ramgarh light infantry, stationed at Chaibasa, following the lead of the native officers and men with the head quarters of the battalion, mutinied, and were marching to join their comrades at Ranchi with the contents of the Chaibasa treasure chest, when the Kols of the Pirs round the station armed, collected in thousands and denying the right of the *Sipahis* to remove the money that had been collected as revenue from them, they intercepted the detachment on the banks of a river and held them most completely in check, till a mandate arrived from the Porahat Raja to send the whole party to him.

After some delay, the Porahat Raja determined to deliver these mutineers into the hands of the British officers who had in the meantime returned to Ranchi, and three or four thousand Larka Kols of the southern Pirs volunteered to act as escort, and this duty they faithfully performed.

But unfortunately, after discharing this essential service, the Porahat Raja went into rebellion, and a considerable section of the Kols considered it their duty to support him. The campaign that ensued was tedious and difficult, as driven from the plains the rebels took refuge in the mountain fastnesses in which Singbhum abounds, and for months during the rains, our troops could do no more than blockade their positions and protect the peaceable villages from their onslaughts. In December, 1859, detachments moved to the rear of the Raja's hills retreat, whilst a cordon of posts was established in his front. At last an attack was made in which many important captures were effected, and though the Raja with his wives escaped for the moment, they found every avenue of retreat barred, and they surrendered to the Commissioner on the 15th February, 1859.

The Kols had early in the struggle, considering the inequality of weapons, shewn themselves not unworthy of their former fame as savage warriors, but they were cowed by the 'enfields' of a Naval Brigade which formed part of our force ; and after a few casualties at long ranges they avoided open attack, and their warfare latterly was confined to cutting off stragglers and burning the villages of the well-disposed.

[184] The capture of the Raja at once put an end to the disturbances ; those who had been in arms returned to their houses and ordinary pursuits, like lambs to a fold, and the Mankis, resuming with zeal their police functions, readily arrested and sent up for trial all heinous offenders that could not be amnestied.

On the whole there has been great progress since the Kols became directly subject to the Government. Under the Judicious management of a succession of officers whose names will always be household words in the Kolhan, Tickell, Haughton, Davies, Birch, Hayes, these savages have been gradually tamed, softened, and civilised rather than subjugated. Not a dozen years ago, they steadily opposed the opening of roads through their territory, removing from the villages to the hills, (their usual custom when dissatisfied and excited), till the obnoxious posts set up to mark the alignment were taken down and the project abandoned. Now their country is in all directions traversed by good roads made by themselves under the superintendence of their officers. New sources of industrial wealth have been opened out, new crops requiring more careful cultivation introduced, new wants created and supplied, even a desire for education has been engendered and fostered, and already well educated Kols are to be found among the ministerial officers of the Chaibasa courts.

In 1867, the twelve years' settlement of the plough tax expired, and so great an advance had been made, that it was considered time to introduce a regular assessment on the lands and remove the reproach that a district so prosperous did not defray the ordinary expenses of its Government.

Settlement of 1867 : For some two or three years previous to the settlement of 1867, every means were taken to prepare the Kols for the impending change. In 1866, a great meeting was held and the consent of the headmen obtained to all that was contemplated. They admitted that it was incumbent on them to pay their share of the burdens of the state, agreed that their lands should be measured and assessment made on the lands instead of on the ploughs ; and this was completed next year by Dr. Hayes. In fixing the rates, an estimate was made of the quantity of land that a man ordinarily cultivated with one plough, for which he paid Rs 2. This was taken as the basis of the new assessment and it might, therefore, be assumed that there was no great enhancement ; but the result gave a gross rental of Rs. 64,808, nearly treble the amount of the plough tax. The Kols were somewhat startled at first, but it has been cheerfully accepted. They made no attempt to shirk the measurements or to conceal their lands ; on the contrary, their great desire was to have all the land they could call their own entered in the register that they might have a full record of rights.

The total net revenue from the Kolhan now fully defrays all expenses of its administration, and if the present admirable self-governing system be maintained, it will no doubt, ere many years elapse, give a large surplus,

SECTION 5

THE MUNDAS, HOS, BHUMIJ

The Hos : Having thus indicated the geographical position of the people that we have to consider under the name of Mundari or Munda and given a sketch of their history, I now proceed to describe their more prominent ethnic peculiarities, and in doing so I propose to select the Hos as the branch of the people, who, from their jealous isolation for so many years, their independence, their long [185] occupation of one territory, and their contempt for all other classes that came in contact with them, especially the Hindus, probably furnish the best illustration, not of the Mundaris in their wildest state, but of what, if left to themselves and permanently located, they were likely to become. Even at the present day, the exclusiveness of the old Hos is remarkable. They will not allow aliens to hold lands near their villages, and, indeed, if it were left to them, no strangers would be permitted to settle in the Kolhan. Now there are settlements of Goalas, Kurmis and others, but though such settlements are under the authority of the Kol Manki of the Pir, the Kols hold little communication with them and jealously watch and circumscribe the spread of their cultivation ; for they argue that they are themselves rapidly increasing and the waste lands should all be reserved for their progeny. The only persons of alien race they tolerate, and so far as suits their own convenience associate with, are the few *Tantis* (weavers), *Goalas* (herdsmen), potters, and blacksmiths, who ply their respective trades for the benefit of the community ; but these people, who are in all probability remnants of the Aryan colonies that the Hos subjugated, must learn their language and generally conform to their customs, the old Hos will not conform to theirs. It is only the rising generation that takes kindly to the acquisition of another language.

The Hos have a tradition concerning the creation of the world and the origin of the human race which is given in Colonel Tickell's account of the tribe published in Volume IX of the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, page 797.

Kol Genesis : Ote Boram[89] and Sing Bonga were self-created, and they made the earth with rocks and water, and they clothed it with grass and tress, and then created animals, first, those that man domesticates, and, afterwards, wild beasts. When all was thus prepared for the abode of man, a boy and a girl were created, and Sing Bonga placed them in a cave at the bottom of a great ravine and finding them to be too innocent to give hope of progeny, he instructed them in the art of making *Illi*, rice beer, which excites the passions and thus the world became peopled.

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[89] Ote Boram is but another name for Sing Bonga.

This little story the old Mankis are fond of telling with all sorts of indecent details.

Legend regarding the origin of different nations : When the first parents had produced twelve boys and twelve girls, Sing Bonga prepared a feast of the flesh of buffaloes, bullocks, goats, sheep, pigs, fowls, and vegetables, and making the brothers and sisters pair off, told each pair to take what they most relished and depart. Then the first and second pair took bullocks and buffaloe's flesh, and they originated the Kols (Hos) and the Bhumij (Matkum) ; the next took of the vegetables only, and are the progenitors of the Brahmans and Chatris ; others took goats and fish, and from them are the Sudras. One pair took the shellfish and became Bhuiyas ; two pairs took pigs and became Santals. One pair got nothing, seeing which, the first pairs gave them of their superfluity, and from the pair thus provided spring the Ghasis who toil not, but live by preying on others. The Hos have now assigned to the English the honor of descent from one of the first two pairs, the elder. The only incident in the above tradition that reminds one of the more highly elaborated Santal account is the divine authority for the use of strong drinks.

Groves : The religion of the Mundari possesses a Shamanistic rather than a Fetish character. They make no images of their gods, nor do they worship symbols, but they believe that though invisible to mortal eyes, the gods [186] may, when propitiated by sacrifice, take up for a time their abode in places especially dedicated to them. Thus they have their "high places" and "their groves"—the former, some mighty mass of rock to which man has added nothing and from which he takes nothing, the latter, a fragment of the original forest, the trees in which have been for ages carefully protected, left when the clearance was first made, lest the sylvan gods of the places disquieted at the wholesale felling of the trees that sheltered them should abandon the locality. Even now if a tree is destroyed in the sacred grove (the Jahira or Sarna), the gods evince their displeasure by withholding seasonable rain.

Divinities : Sing Bonga, the creator and preserver, is adored as the sun. Prayer and sacrifice are made to him as to a beneficent deity who has no pleasure in the destruction of any of his creatures, though, as a father, he chastises his erring children, and to him our gratitude is due for all the benefits we enjoy.

He is said to have married Chando Omol, or the moon, but she deceived him on one occasion and he cut her in two, but repenting of his anger, he allows her at times to shine forth in full beauty. The stars are her daughters.

The worship of the sun as the supreme deity is the foundation of the religion of the Kols in Chutia Nagpur and also of the Oraons who address him as Dharmi, the Holy one. He is not regarded as the author of sickness or calamity, but he may be invoked to avert it, and this appeal is often made when the sacrifices to the minor deities have been unproductive.

The Kharrias consider that each head of a family is bound to make a certain number of offerings to Sing Bonga during his life time, and he may complete the complement and clear the account as soon as he pleases. This is not now practised by the Hos or Mundas, but I have been informed that they regard it as a very orthodox custom.

The other deities are all considered subordinate to Sing Bonga, and though they possess supernatural powers, there are cases beyond their authority, and when they are invoked in such cases, it is their duty to intercede with Sing Bonga and so obtain for their votaries the solicited relief. This notion of the intercessional power of the minor spirits is remarkable.

Chanala Desum Bonga and his wife Pangora have been included among the minor deities of the Hos, but these are the styles under which Sing Bonga and his wife Chando Omol desire to be worshipped by female votaries. Chanala is to women what Sing Bonga is to men.

The following singular story has recently been recounted to me by a Mundari Pahn, or priest, of a village in the southern quarter of the Chutia Nagpur District. It makes out that the minor deities are really fallen angels, like Satan and his host.

There were formerly people in heaven who served Sing Bonga. They absented themselves from work (Deponent says from *cutcherry*) because after seeing their faces in a mirror, they found they were in God's image and, therefore, his equals. Thereupon God kicked them out of heaven, and they fell in a place that goes by the name of 'Terasi Pirhi Ekasibadi.' They found here quantities of iron ore, and they immediately made seven furnaces and commenced smelting it, and the fire from them burnt the trees and the grass, and the smoke and the sparks ascended to heaven. This went on night and [187] day. It disturbed Sing Bonga, and he gave orders that if they worked all day, they must stop all night ; and if they worked all night, they must stop all day, but they would not obey. Sing Bonga then sent two king crows and an owl to warn them, but they did not attend, and they tried to catch the birds with their furnace tongs and spoil their long tails. Then he sent a crow and a 'Lipi' (lark) ; the crows were formerly white but the Vulcans caught the crow sent by Sing Bonga and smoked it black, and they made the Lipi red and flattened its head, but the orders of Sing Bonga were not carried out. Other messengers were sent with no better success ; then Sing Bonga resolved to go himself, and he stopped at the house of Lutkum Haram and Lutkum Burhi, an old couple who made charcoal, and he served them incognito for some time and amused himself by playing with the smelter's children. They played with balls of iron, he with eggs, but the eggs smashed the iron balls. When the old man and his wife went to the woods to make charcoal, they left Sing Bonga in charge of the hut and told him to watch the *dhan* laid out to dry, but he played all the time and the fowls ate up the *dhan* except a few grains, and when the old couple returned, they mourned for the loss of their dinner ; but Sing Bonga consoled them, and taking the few grains that were left, he filled all the pots with them, and when the old people accused him of having stolen rice to make good what was lost by his carelessness, he answered mildly, "No, God gives it."

The furnaces of the smelters were now continually falling in, and the smelters sought an *Ojha*[40] to ascertain the cause, but as they could not find one, they placed rice on a winnowing fan, and it led them to Sing Bonga, and they asked him what they should do. He replied, you must offer a human sacrifice ; but they could not find a man, and returned to Sing Bonga who said that he himself would be the sacrifice. Then under his direction they made a new furnace and instead of iron ore, they put Sing Bonga into it, and blew the bellows and when there was sufficient heat, as they had been instructed, they sprinkled water on the fire, and Sing Bonga appeared uninjured, but from the furnace flowed streams of gold and silver, and precious stones shining like the sun. Then Sing Bonga said, "See what one person has done ; if you all pass through the furnace, what a heap of wealth you will have !" They agreed to be smelted, and they entered the furnace, and were shut up, and Sing Bonga made their wives blow the bellows. When the people inside began to howl, the women were alarmed, and would have stopped, but Sing Bonga said, "Blow away ! they are only quarrelling over the division of the spoil." Thus they were all destroyed, because they had not obeyed the word of Sing Bonga. Then the women said, "You have killed our husbands, what are we to do ?" Sing Bonga then assigned to each of these women a locality, and they became the minor deities or *bhuts*, male and female ; some had rocks, some groves, some pools, some rivers, as their abodes, and thus originated the Naiads and Dryads, the Marang-Buru or Bura-Bonga of the hills, the Desa-ulis of the groves, and the Naga Eras of the streams.

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[40] Diviner. The word '*ojha*' means 'entrails,' and the person alluded to is so called, because he looks into futurity by examining the entrails of birds. When a vacancy occurs in the office of priest of a village, a 'Sup' or winnowing fan with some rice is used, and it takes the person who holds it to the individual on whom the mantle has fallen.

The next in order among the gods is Marang-Buru [41] or Bura Bonga, the mountain god. The highest or most remarkable hill or rock in the neighbourhood is the shrine [188] of this deity or spirit. The Kols evidently recognise the importance of wooded hills in securing the needful supply of rain, and trusting entirely to rain for irrigation, and regarding Bura Bonga as the head of the heavenly water department, they naturally pay him special attention. Every third year, in most places, buffaloes are sacrificed in his honour, and fowls and goats every year. He is also invoked in sickness. In Chutia Nagpur a remarkable bluff, near the village of Lodhma, is the Marang-Buru or Maha-Buru for a wide expanse of country. Here people of all castes assemble and sacrifice— Hindus, even Muhammadans, as well as Kols. There is no visible object of worship , the sacrifices are offered on the top of the hill, a bare semi-globular mass of rock. If animals are killed, the heads are left there, and afterwards appropriated by the Pahn, or village priest. Hindus say that the Marang-Buru, as a deity, is the same as Mahadeo, but under what name the Muhammadans pay devotions to him I know not. They aver, however, that they cannot exist in Chutia Nagpur without propitiating the local deities.

Every village has in its vicinity a grove reputed to be a remnant of the primeval forest left intact for the local gods when the clearing was originally made. Here Desauli, the tutelary deity of the village, and his wife, Jhar-Era or Maburu, are supposed to sojourn when attending to the wants of their votaries. There is a Desauli for every village, and his authority does not extend beyond the boundary of the village to which his grove belongs ; if a man of that village cultivates land in another village, he must pay his devotions to the Desauli of both. The grove deities are held responsible for the crops, and are especially honored at all the great agricultural festivals. They are also appealed to in sickness.

The next in order are Naiads, 'Naga-Era,' who presides over tanks, wells, and any bodies of stagnant water (called Ekhir-Bonga by the Mundaris), and Garha-Era, the river goddess.

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[41] The great mountain. The 'Tay-an Song', great mountain, is the name of one of the gods worshipped by the Chinese and Mandu Tartars. See *Social Life of the Chinese* by Rev. J. Doolittle, vol. i. p. 259.

They, too, are frequently, and no doubt very truly, denounced as the cause of sickness, and propitiated by sacrifices to spare their victims.

The remaining spirits are the ancestral shades, who are supposed to hover about, doing good or evil to their descendants. They are often denounced as the cause of calamitous visitation, and propitiatory offerings are made to them ; but besides this, a small portion of the food prepared in every house is daily set apart for them. The ancestors are the Penates, and are called 'Ham-ho.'

The ancestors of the wife have also to be considered ; they are called 'Horatan-ho', because sacrifices to them are always offered on the path 'Hora,' by which the old woman came as a bride to the house.

The name of the deity to be invoked in cases of sickness is ascertained by divination. This is done in various ways. One of the most usual is by dropping oil into a vessel of water ; the name of a deity is pronounced as the oil is dropped ; if it forms one globule in the water, it is considered that the right name has been selected ; if it splutters and forms several globules, another is tried. The person who applies this test is considered a professional, but he has no priestly office. There is nothing like a hereditary priesthood among the Hos. In every village there are one or more influential elders to whom the duty of performing the general sacrifices is assigned, but on other occasions the head of the family is according to the patriarchal model its priest.

It has been said that the Hos and Mundas, like the Karens, have a tradition of the destruction of the human race, all but two persons, by deluge, but of this I have not [189] been able to discover a trace, and it appears incompatible with their tradition of the origin of different races. 'Lurbeng' is in their language a serpent, properly a water-snake, and the same name is poetically given by them to the rain-bow, and by a simple reasoning on cause and effect, they say "the serpent stops the rain", but it requires stronger imaginative powers than I possess to eliminate from this a tradition of the deluge.

The Mundas consult auguries in selecting the site of a house or village with prayer to Sing Bonga. A small quantity of rice is placed in holes made at the four corners of the selected site where it is left all night, and if found undisturbed in the morning, the site is good. Prayer is offered twice—*first*, that the test applied may truly indicate, if the site be good or bad ; *secondly*, for a blessing on the chosen site.

Ho Tribes : The Hos and Mundas are divided into tribes called Kilis, and a man must not marry a girl of his own Kili. The Mundaris, like the Oraons, adopt, as their tribal distinction, the name of some animal, and the flesh of that animal is tabooed to them as food, as the Eels, the Tortoise. With one exception I do not find among the Kilis of the Larkas or Hos the names of any animal. The 'Murmu' or Nilgai, is common as a tribal name to Hos and Santals.

The following are Ho Kilis—the list is not exhaustive :—

1. *Buriuli.*
2. *Purthi.*
3. *Sincoi.*
4. *Baipoi.*
5. *Sundi.*
6. *Bandi.*
7. *Murmu.*
8. *Marli.*
9. *Kisku.*
10. *Hansdā.*
11. *Tudi.*
12. *Chorai.*

13. *Tihu.*
14. *Hembarun.*
15. *Podoro.*
16. *Munduia.*
17. *Lagori.*
18. *Kalundia.*

Seven to twelve inclusive, are common to Hos and Santals.

Ho Villages : The Ho villages of the old settlements in the best cultivated portion of the Kolhan are often prettily situated on hills overlooking their flat terraced rice fields and undulating uplands. The sites are well marked by very ancient and noble tamarind trees, with mangoe and jack trees and bamboos, and they form very pleasing features in otherwise very pleasing landscapes. The houses, constructed by the better class of cultivators, nestling among the trees, are roomy with substantial mud or wattled walls and thatched roofs, a neat verandah and well-raised plinth. The out-houses are so placed as to form, with the family residence, three or four sides of a square, having a large pigeon house in the centre. The place where the ashes of the dead are deposited is generally near the Munda's house, and the great slabs, used as grave-stones under the shade of the grand solemn tamarind trees, are the favorite seats of the elders when they meet after their work to gossip, smoke, or talk over parish affairs.

Though pigs are bred in the villages, they are accommodated with well-constructed styes and the farm premises are kept tolerably clean. These remarks do not, however, apply to the houses of the laborers, which are small and miserable. The Hos take great interest in poultry, and fully appreciate the excellencies of a good fat capon. Capons are generally found in Ho villages, but the owners are not always willing to dispose of them, and the Hos have been subjected to much obloquy, because they prefer to keep such delicacies for their own use.

[190] Cock fights : Another incentive to the breeding of fowls is their great love of cock fighting ; at all market-places on market days, and at other places on regular fixed days, they have great meetings for this amusement. The cocks are armed with cruel steel spurs, and the combat is always *a l'outrance,* the winning cock gaining for his master the corpse of his foe. I have noticed with some pleasure that women frequenting the markets kept aloof from the cock-fights, and there was feminine delicacy and tenderness in this abstinence from which the fair sex of some civilized nations might take a lesson.

The Kols also breed ducks and geese, and they keep sheep and goats for food, but it is generally for the purpose of propitiatory sacrifice that they are slaughtered and eaten. Bullocks and buffaloes are also so used. The village cattle are during the day under charge, not of their owners, but of the village herdsmen of the Gor or Goala caste, who are paid in grain for their services. The Kols, like most of the Indo-Chinese hill races, make no use of the milk, but the herdsmen are not absolutely prohibited from doing so.

In the villages of the Southern Pirs, which have more the appearance of recent settlements, the houses are so much scattered, that families may almost be said to live apart, or a village consists of a number of separate hamlets ; but in the older villages, though each house stands within its own plot of ground, they are pretty close together, and the community appear very socially inclined.

Physical Traits : The Hos of Singbhum and the Mundaris of the Southern Parganas of the Lohardagga District are physically a much finer people than the Bhumij, the Santals, or any other of the Kolarians previously described. The males average five feet five or six inches in height, the women five feet two. The average height of a number of the Juang tribe I found to be for males less than five feet, and women four feet eight. In features the Hos exhibit much variety, and I think in a great many families there is considerable admixture of Aryan blood. Many have high noses and oval faces, and young girls are sometimes met with who have delicate and regular features, finely chiselled straight noses, and perfectly formed mouths and chins. The eyes, however, are seldom so large, so bright and gazelle-like as those of pure Hindu maidens, but I have met strongly marked Mongolian features, and some are dark and coarse like the Santals. In colour they vary greatly, 28-29 and 30 of Brossac's table are about the commonest tints, the copper tints, I may say. Eyes dark brown (about two of Brossac), hair black, straight or wavy, and rather fine, worn long by males and females, but the former shave the forehead. Both men and women are noticeable for their fine erect carriage and long free stride. The hands and feet are large but well formed. The men care little about their personal appearance. It requires a great deal of education to reconcile them to the encumbrance of clothing, and even those who are wealthy move about all but naked, as proudly as if they were clad in purple and fine linen.

Dress : The women in an unsophisticated state are equally averse to superfluity of clothing. In remote villages they may still be seen with only a rag between the legs fastened before and behind to a string round the waist. This is called *botoi* ; the national dress is however a long strip of cloth worn as a girdle round the loins, knotted behind and the ends brought between the **[191]** legs and fastened to the girdle in front, but in the principal group of villages about Chaibasa the young women dress themselves decently and gracefully. The style of wearing the hair is peculiar, collected in a knot artificially enlarged, not in the centre of the back of the head, but touching the back of the right ear. Flowers are much used in the 'coiffure'. The neck ornaments most in vogue a year or two ago, were very small black beads, but in this one small item of their simple toilette, fashion changes, and the beads most prized one year are looked on with repugnance the next.[42] As with the Santals very massive bracelets and armlets are worn, and anklets of bell-metal. It is a singular sight to see the young women at the markets subjecting themselves to the torture of being fitted with a pair of these anklets. They are made so that they can just, with great violence, be forced on. The operation is performed by the manufacturers, who put moistened leather on the heel and instep to prevent excoriation. The girl clinging to and resting on one of her companions cries bitterly at the violence inflicted on her and the operation is a long one but when it is over she admires her decorated foot and instep and smiles through her tears.

The Ho women have adopted as their distinctive mark by 'Godna', an arrow which they regard as their national emblem. A Ho unable to write, if asked to attach his mark or sign manual to a document, does so by making a rude representative of an arrow. The Munda women use the same *godna* marks as the Juangs, and the Kharrias previously described.

The Larkas are lightly assessed, and cultivating their own lands, never join any of the numerous bands of laborers emigrating to the tea districts. They refuse to hear the voice of the recruiter, charm he never so enticingly. They care not to work for hire, and never, if they can avoid it, carry loads. The use of the block wheeled dray is universal among them, and all the carrying necessary in their agricultural operations is done by it.

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[42] Necklaces of real coral and silver coins are now all the rage.

Social and domestic customs. Childbirth : After the birth of a child[43] both mother and father are considered unclean, *bisi*, for eight days, during which period the other members of the family are sent out of the house, and the husband has to cook for his wife. If it be a difficult case of parturition, the malignancy of some spirit of evil is supposed to be at work, and after divination to ascertain his name, a sacrifice is made to appease him.

Naming the child : At the expiration of the eight days, the banished members of the family return, friends are invited to a feast, and the child is ceremoniously named. The name of the grand-father is usually given to the first born son, but not without an ordeal to ascertain if it will prove fortunate. As the name is mentioned, a grain of *urid* (pulse), is thrown into a vessel with water, the name is adopted if it floats, rejected if it sinks.

The Hos have a pleasing custom of introducing into their families the names or titles of persons they like, irrespective of creed or race. Thus Major, Captain, Tickell, Doctor, have become common names in the Kolhan. The names thus introduced will, probably, remain in the Kolhan for ages. The writer of an article that appeared not long ago in the *Calcatta Quarterly Review* appears to be under the impression that this custom of naming Kol children after officers had been introduced by the missionaries. [192] The missionaries have had nothing to do with it. It is a spontaneous act of good will on the part of unconverted Hos.

There are no religious ceremonies between childhood and marriage.

Marriages, &c : Owing to the high price placed on daughters by their fathers, the large number of adult unmarried girls seen in every considerable village in the Kolhan, is a very peculiar feature in the social state of the community.

In no other country in India are spinsters found so advanced in years, and in many of the best families grey headed old maids may be seen, whose charms were insufficient to warrant the large addition to the usual price called *pan*, imposed in consideration of the high connection that union would confer. The *pan* is calculated, and for the most part paid, in cattle, indicating that the custom dates from a time when there was no current coin, and fathers of Manki dignity demand from forty to fifty head of cattle for each of their girls. Dr. Hayes finding that in consequence of this practice, the number of marriages was annually diminishing, and immoral intimacy between the sexes increasing, convened in 1868 a meeting of representative men for the express purpose of discussing this question, after a long debate it was unanimously agreed that a reduction should be made.

It was resolved that in future a *pan* was not to exceed ten head of cattle, and that if one pair of oxen, one cow, and seven rupees were given, it should be received as an equivalent for the ten head. For the poorer classes it was fixed at seven rupees. Even thus modified the *pan* in Singbhum is higher than it is in Chutia Nagpur for the multitude. The Mankis and head men of the latter country conforming to the Hindu customs, have given up exacting it.

In olden times young men counteracted the machinations of avaricious parents against the course of true love by forcibly carrying off the girl, and still at times evade extortion by running away with her. Then the parents have to submit to such terms as arbitrators think fair ; the abduction it was necessary to put a stop to, and elopements are not considered respectable, so until the conference, prices had a tendency to rise rather than fall. The old generation of Mankis vehemently opposed 'any reduction. The second generation, since the accession of the British, are now in the ascendant, and they entertain more enlightened views, but, notwithstanding the compact, I have not yet heard of a marriage in high life in which the reduced *pan* has been accepted.

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[43] Settlement Report by Doctor Hayes.

Ho girls of the period : It is certainly not from any yearning for celibacy that the marrige of Singbhum maidens is so long postponed. The girls will tell you frankly that they do all they can to please the young men, and I have often heard them pathetically bewailing their want of success. They make themselves as attractive as they can, flirt in the most demonstrative manner, and are not too coy to receive in public attention from those they admire. They may be often seen in well assorted pairs returning from market with arms interlaced, and looking at each other as lovingly as if they were so many groups of Cupids and Psyches, but with all this the *men will not propose*.

Tell a maiden you think her nice looking, she is sure to reply, "Oh yes, I am, but what is the use of it, the young men of my acquaintance don't see it." Even when a youth has fully made up his mind to marry, it may happen that fate is against **[193]** the happiness of the young couple ; bad omens are seen that cause the match to be postponed or broken off, or papa cannot, or will not, pay the price demanded. When a young man has made his choice, he communicates the fact to his parents, and a deputation of the friends of the family, is sent to the girls house to ascertain all that should be known regarding her family, age, appearance, and means. If the information obtained and the result of the inspection be satisfactory, and the omens observed on the road have been propitious, an offering is made on the part of the young man, and if it be received, the deputation are invited to stay and are feasted.

The report of the deputation being favorable, a day is fixed for a meeting between the parents and the terrible question of the *pan* discussed. At this point, many matches are broken off, in cosequence of greediness on one side or stinginess on the other. The amount agreed on has to be paid before the day can be fixed for the marriage, and when delivery of the cattle is made, a pot of beer has to be given from the bride's side for each animal.

At last if all this is got over, the appointed day arrives, and the bride is escorted to the village of her intended by all her own young female friends with music and dancing. The young men and girls of the village, and those invited from neighbouring villages, form a cortege for the bridegroom. They go out and meet the bride's party, and after a dance in the grove, in which the bride and bridegroom take part, mounted on the hips of two of their female friends, they enter the village together, where there is a great feast, a great consumption of the rice beer, and much more dancing and singing. Ceremony there is none, but the turning point in the rite is when the bride and groom pledge each other. A cup of beer is given to each; the groom pours some of the contents of his cup into the bride's cup, and she returns the compliment. Drinking the liquor thus bleended, they become of one 'Kili' that is, the bride is admitted into her husbands tribe, and they become one.[44] This has, I believe, succeeded an older custom of drinking from the same cup.

The bride touched the goblet, the knight took it up,
He drank off the wine, and he threw down the cup.

After remaining with her husband for three days only, it is the correct thing for the wife to run away from him, and tell all her friends that she loves him not, and will see him no more. This is, perhaps, reparation to the dignity of the sex injured by the bride's going to the bridegroom's house to be married, instead of being sought for and taken as a wife from her own. So it is correct for the husband to show great anxiety for the loss of his wife and diligently to seek her, and when he finds her, he carries her off by main force. I have seen a young wife thus found and claimed and borne away, screeching and struggling in the arms of her husband, from the midst of a crowded bazar. No one interferes on these occasions, and no one assists. If the husband cannot manage the business himself, he must leave her alone.

[194] Kind treatment of their wives : After this little escapade, the wife at once settles down, assumes her place as the well contented mistress of the household, and, as a rule, in no country in the world are wives better treated. Dr. Hayes says, "a Kol or Ho makes a regular companion of his wife. She is consulted in all difficulties, and receives the fullest consideration due to her sex." Indeed it is not uncommon to see in the Kolhan, husbands so subject to the influence of their wives, that they may be regarded as henpecked. Instances of infidelity in wives are very rare. I never heard of one, but I suppose such things occur as there is a regulated penalty. The unfaithful wife is discarded, and the seducer must pay to the husbund the entire value of the *pan*.

Mundari marriages : The Mundari marriages, as solemnized in most parts of Chutia Nagpur, have more ceremonies, some of which appear to have been taken from the Hindus, at all events the ceremonies I allude to are common to Hindus and aborigines ; but it is not always easy to predicate by whom they were originated. We may, however, safely assert that practices common to both, which are not in accordance with the ritual prescribed in the *Vedas* are derived from the aborigines.

Among Mundas having any pretensions to respectability, the young people are not allowed to arrange these affairs for themselves. Their parents settle it all for them, French fashion, and after the liberty they have enjoyed, and the liaisons they are sure to have made, this interference on the part of the old folk must be very aggravating to the young ones. The *pan* varies from Rs. 4 to Rs. 20, but the marriage feast is very liberally provided, and as it takes place at the bride's house, the expense chiefly falls on her father. When the day for the wedding is fixed, the bridegroom goes in some state to the bride's house, the young men who accompany him "a gallant band with sword and brand" fantastically dressed, and as they aproach the village of the bride, her friends come out to meet them in similar guise, and a mimic fight takes place which ends in the simultaneous rush of the whole party into the village, making a terrible row. The bride and bridegroom are now well anointed with turmeric, and then taken and wedded not to each other but to two trees, the bride to a *mahwa* (*Bassia latifolia*) the groom to a mangoe, or both to mangoes. They are made to touch the tree with *sindur* (red lead), and then to clasp it, and they are tied to it. On returning they are placed standing face to face, the girl on a curry stone over a plough share, supported on sheaves of grass or corn. The bridegroom stands ungallantly treading on his wife's toes, and in this position touches her forehead with the red lead, she touches his forehead in a similar manner. The bride's maids then, after some preliminary splashing and sprinkling, pour a jar of water over the head of each, this necessitates a change of raiment and apparently concludes the ceremony as the young people going inside to change, do not appear again till the cock crowing announces the dawn or its approach. At the first crow the bridesmaids, who with the young men have been merrily keeping it up all night with the song and the dance, burst into the nuptial chamber and bring forth the blushing bride and her bashful lord and *their clothes*. They all go to the river or to a tank to wash the clothes and bathe, and parties of boys and girls form sides under the leadership of the bride and bridegroom, and pelt each other with clods of earth. The bridegroom next takes a water vessel and conceals it in the stream or water for the bride to find. She then conceals it from him, and when **[195]** he has found it, she takes it up, filled with water, and places it on her head. She lifts her arm to support the pitcher, and the bridegroom standing behind her with his bow strung, and the hand that holds it lightly resting on her shoulder, discharges an arrow through the pretty loop-hole thus formed into the path before her. The girl walks on to where the arrow falls, and with head erect, still bearing the pitcher of water picks it up with her foot, takes it into her hand, and restores it to her husband with a graceful obeisance. She thus shews she can adroitly perform her domestic duties, and knows her duty to her lord and master, whilst he, on his part, in discharging an arrow to clear her path of an imaginary foe, indicates that he is prepared to do his duty as her guide and protector for life.

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[44] It is worthy of notice that in the marriages of the Chinese a precisely similar custom obtains. "After the worship of the tablets they (bride, and bridegroom) rise to their feet and remain standing in silence, while they are helped to their wedding wine. One of the female attendants takes the two goblets from the table, and having partially filled them with a mixture of wine and honey, she pours some of the contents from one to the other several times, she then holds one to the mouth of the groom and the other, to the mouth of the bride, who continue to face each other and who then sip a little wine. She then changes the goblets and the bride sips out of the one just used by the groom, and the groom sips out of the one just used by the bride. Sometimes only one gob let is used." *Social life of the Chinese*, by Revd. J. Doolittle, Vol. I, p. 87,

The Hos are fair marksmen with the bow and arrow, and great sportsmen. From childhood they practise archery ; every lad herding cattle or watching crops makes this his sole pastime, and skill is attained even in knocking over small birds with blunt arrows. They also keep hawks, and the country in the vicinity of their villages is generally destitute of game. In the months intervening between the harvest home and the rains, they frequently go in large parties to distant jungles ; and with them, as with the Santals, there is every year in May a great meet for sport, in which people of all classes of the neighbourhood and surrounding villages take part. From the setting-in of the rains to the harvest, the time of the people is fairly employed in cultivation, to which they pay great attention. The women have their full share of labor in the fields, indeed, the only agricultural work they are exempted from is ploughing. They work from early morn till noon, then comes the mid-day meal, after which their time is pretty much at their own disposal. The young people then make themselves tidy, stroll about the village, or visit neighbouring villages, and the old people sitting on the grave stones, indulge in deep potations of rice beer, and smoke, and gossip, or sleep.

Amongst the amusements of the Hos, I must not omit to mention *pegtops*. They are roughly made of blocks of hard wood, but their mode of spinning and playing them, one on another, is the same as with us. Peg topping has been noticed as a Kasia amusement, see page [58]

Agriculture : Their agricultural implements consist in the ordinary wooden plough tipped with iron, a harrow, the *kodali*, or large hoe, a sickle and the *tangi*, or battle-axe, for it is used for all purposes ; the block-wheeled dray, and an implement to remove earth with, in altering the levels of land to prerare it for irrigation and rice cultivation. The latter consists of a broad piece of board, firmly attached to a pole and yoke, so that its edge touches the ground at an angle as it is drawn by oxen or buffaloes attached to it. The Hos make these agricultural implements themselves ; every man is to some extent a carpentor, handy with his adze, and clever in simple contrivances.

The Kols plough with cows as well as oxen, but it is to be recollected that they make no other use of the animal as they never touch milk. Buffaloes are preferred to bullocks as plough cattle. They have a rude kind of oil-press in every village.

The Mundaris and Larkas raise three crops of rice, the early or Gora, the autumnal or Bad, and the late or Bera crop. Indian corn and the millets Murwa and Gondali, are also cultivated as early crops. Wheat, gram, mustard seed (*sesamum*), they have recently taken to as cold-weather and spring crops. Tobacco and cotton they have long cultivated, but not in sufficient quantities even for their own consumption.

[196] Arts : They have no notion of weaving, and if left to their own resources for clothing, would probably resume their leaves, but every village has one or two families of 'Tantis' or weavers, who are now almost undistinguishable from the Hos. The villagers make over their cotton to the weavers, and pay for the loom labour in cotton or grain.

The Kols generally understand the smelting of iron. Their country is pretty rich in that mineral, but it is the wilder clans, the mountain Kharrias, the Birhors, and in Lohardagga or Palamau, the Asurs and Agariahs, that chiefly utilize it, the people who devote themselves to it regularly paying no attention to the cultivation of the soil. The Mundas have also acquired the art of washing for gold in the streams and rivers that drain the plateau of Chutia Nagpur, or rise in the bordering hills which are all auriferous, but the average quantity obtained is not more than suffices to give a bare subsistence to the persons employed in it, though this includes men, women, and children. The richest field, Sonapet, is the valley of the Sonai river below the plateau opening on Kharsawan. The population are all Mundaris, enjoying a rich soil, a most romantic and sequestered situation, and to complete it is a terrestrial paradise, low fixed rents. This was secured to them after the insurrection of 1831, in which they lustily joined.

Ho Feasts and Dances : The Hos are a purely agricultural people, and their festivals are all connected with that pursuit. In describing these festivals I avail myself of information on the subject kindly collated for me by W. Ritchie Esq., District Superintendent, Singbhum. The chief requisite for festivities of all kinds is the preparation of an ample quantity of the home-made beer, called Illi. It is made from rice which is boiled and allowed to ferment till it is sufficiently intoxicating, and its proper preparation is considered one of the most useful accomplishments that a young damsel can possess.

The Hos keep seven festivals in the year. The first or principal is called the Magh Parab, or Desauli Bonga. This is held in the month of Magh, or January, when the granaries are full of grain, and the people, to use their own expression, full of devilry. They have a strange notion that at this period, men and women are so over-charged with vicious propensities, that it is absolutely necessary for the safety of the persons to let off steam by allowing for a time full vent to the passions.

The festival, therefore, becomes a saturnale, during which servants forget their duty to their masters, children their reverence for parents, men their respect for women, and women all notions of modesty, delicacy, and gentleness ; they become raging bacchantes.

It opens with a sacrifice to Desauli of three fowls—a cock and two hens, one of which must be black, and offered with some flowers of the Palas trees (*Butea frondosa*), bread made from rice-flour, and sesamum seeds. The sacrifice and offerings are made by the village priest, if there be one, or if not, by any elder of the village who possesses the necessary legendary lore, and he prays that during the year they are about to enter on, they and their children may be preserved from all misfortune and sickness, and that they may have seasonable rain and good crops. Prayer is also made in some places for the souls of the departed. At this period an evil spirit is suposed to infest the locality, and to get rid of it, the men, women, and children go in procession round and through every part of the village, with sticks in their hands as if beating for game, singing a wild chant and [197] vociferating violently till they feel assured that the bad spirit must have fled ; and they make noise enough to frighten a legion. These religious ceremonies over, the people give themselves up to feasting, drinking immoderately of rice-beer till they are in the state of wild ebriety most suitable for the process of letting off steam.

The Ho population of the villages forming the environs of Chaibasa are at other seasons quiet and reserved in manner, and in their demeanour towards women gentle and decorous ; even in the flirtations I have spoken of, they never transcend the bounds of decency. The girls, though full of spirits and somewhat saucy, have innate notions of propriety that make them modest in demeanour, though devoid of all prudery ; and of the obscene abuse so frequently heard from the lips of common women in Bengal, they appear to have no knowledge. They are delicately sensitive under harsh language of any kind, and never use it to others ; and since their adoption of clothing, they are careful to drape themselves decently as well as gracefully, but they throw all this aside during the Magh feast. Their natures appear to undergo a temporary change. Sons and daughters revile their parents in gross language, and parents their children ; men and women become almost like animals in the indulgence of their amorous propensities. They enact all that was ever pourtrayed by prurient artists in a bacchanalian festival or pandean orgie ; and as the light of the sun they adore and the presence of numerous spectators seem to be no restraint on their indulgence, it cannot be expected that chastity is preserved when the shades of night fall on such a scene of licentiousness and debauchery.

This festival is not kept at one period in all the villages. The time during which it is held in different villages of a circle extends over a period of a month or six weeks, and under a perconcerted arrangement, the festival commences at each village on a different date, and lasts three or four days ; so the inhabitants of each may take part in a long succession of these orgies and as the utmost liberty is given to girls, the parents never attempting to exercise any restraint, the girls of one village sometimes pair off with the young men of another and absent themselves for days. Liaisons thus prolonged generally end in marriages.

The ordinary Ho dance is similar to that which I have described as the Rasa dance of the Santals, an amorous but not a very rapid or lively movement ; but the Magh dance is like a *grande galope*, a very joyous, frisky, harum-scarum scamper of boys and girls through the village, and from one village to another.

The Mundaris keep this festival in much the same manner as the Hos, but one day is fixed for its commencement everywhere, the full of the moon in Magh, and there is less commingling of the boys and girls from different villages. The resemblance to a Saturnale is very complete, as at this festival the farm laborers are feasted by their masters and allowed the utmost freedom of speech in addressing them. It is the festival of the harvest home ; the termination of one year's toil and a slight respite from it before they commence again. At this feast the Mundaris dance the Jadura, remarkable for the very pretty and peculiar manner in which the lines of porformers interlace their arms behind their backs.

The next in the order of festivals is what is called 'Bah Bonga' by the Hos, corresponding to the Sarhul of the Mundaris. 'Bah' means flower, and the festival takes place when the Sal[45] tree is in full bloom in March or April, a favorite season with many [198] tribes ; for it is then that the death of Gautama is commemorated. With the Hos and Mundaris it is held in honor of the founders of the village and the tutelary deity or spirit, called Darha by the Oraons. The boys and girls collect basketfuls of the flowers, make garlands of them, weave them in their hair, and decorate their houses with them. Each house makes an offering of these flowers and sacrifices a cock. The people dance for a couple of days and nights incessantly and refresh themselves meanwhile with beer, but in the Kolhan it is the quiet style of dance, and there are no open breaches of decorum. The dance on this occasion of the Mundaris is called the Bahni, the boys and girls poussette to each other, clapping their hands and pirouetting, so as to cause *dos-a-dos* concussions, which are the source of much mirth.

The selection of the *sal* flowers as the offering to the founders of the village is appropriate, as there are few villages that do not occupy ground once covered by *sal* forest, and at this period new ground, if there be any, is cleared for cultivation.

The third festival is the 'Damurai' which comes off in May, or at the time of the sowing for the first rice crop. It is held in honour of the ancestral shades and other spirits, who if unpropitiated, would prevent the seed from germinating. A he-goat and a cock are sacrificed.

The fourth festival is the 'Hero Bonga' in June, the Mundaris call it 'Harihar'. It is to propitiate Desauli and Jahir Burhi for a blessing on the crops. In the Mundari villages every house-holder plants a branch of the Bhelwa in his field, and contributes to the general offering which is made by the priest in the sacred grove, a. fowl, a pitcher of beer, and a handful of rice. In Singbhum a he-goat is offered.

This is followed by the Bah-towli Bonga, which takes place in July. Each cultivator sacrifices a fowl, and after some mysterious rites, a wing is stripped off and inserted in the cleft of a bamboo and stuck up in the rice-field and dung-heap. If this is omitted, it is supposed that the rice will not come to maturity. It appears more like a charm than a sacrifice.

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[45] Called in Mundari 'Sarjum'.

This corresponds with the 'Karam' in the Kol villages of Chutia Nagpur, where the 'hoja' is danced ; the women in this dance follow the men and change their positions and attitudes in obedience to signals from them. When the movement called *hoja* is asked for, the women all kneel and pat the ground with their hands in time to the music, as if coaxing the earth to be fruitful. On the day appointed, a branch of the Karam tree is cut and planted in the Akhra, or dancing place. This festival is kept by Hindus in Chutia Nagpur as well as by Kols.

The sixth festival is the offering of the first fruits of the harvest to Sing Bonga ; it is solemnised in August when the Gora rice ripens, and till the sacrifice is complete, the new rice must not be eaten. The offering in addition to the rice is a white cock ; this is a thanks-offering to the Creator and Preserver. It is called Jum-nama and considered of great importance. To eat new rice without thus thanking God is regarded as impious.

The seventh festival is the Kalam Bonga, when an offering of a fowl is made to Desauli on the removal of the rice straw from the threshing floor, *kalam*, to be stacked.

The Pahns, or priests, of the Kol villages in Chutia Nagpur have another festival for the performance of which they are in possession of some rent-free land called [199] *dalikatari*. The sacrifices are every second year a fowl, every third year a ram, every fourth year a buffaloe, to 'Marang Buru', and the main object is to induce him to send seasonable rain.

The above are all general festivals, but the Hos on their individual account make many sacrifices to the gods. In cases of sickness and calamity, they commence by sacrificing what is small and of little value ; but if the desired change is retarded, they go on until the patient dies, or their live stock is entirely exhausted.

Superstitions, witchcraft : All disease in men or animals is attributed to one of two causes, the wrath of some evil spirit who has to be appeased, or to the spell of some witch or sorcerer, who should be destroyed or driven out of the land. In the latter case a 'Sokha', or witch-finder, is employed to divine who has cast the spell, and various modes of divination are resorted to. One of the most common is the test by the stone and *paila*. The latter is a large wooden cup shaped like a half cocoa-nut used as a measure for grain. It is placed under a flat stone as a pivot for the stone to turn. A boy is then seated on the stone, supporting himself by his hands, and the names of all the people in the neighbourhood are slowly pronounced, and as each name is uttered, a few grains of rice are thrown at the boy. When they come to the name of the witch or wizard, the stone turns and the boy rolls off ; this, no doubt, is the effect of the boy's falling into a state of coma and losing the power of supporting himself with his hand. In former times, the person denounced and all his family were put to death in the belief that witches breed witches and sorcerers. The taint is in the blood. When during the mutinies the Singbhum District was left for a short time without officers, a terrible raid was made against all, who for years had been suspected of dealings with the evil one, and the most atrocious murders were committed. Young men were told off for the duty by the elders ; neither sex nor age were spared. When order was restored, these crimes were brought to light, and the actual perpetrators condignly punished, and since then we have not only had no recurrence of witch murderers, but the superstition itself is dying out in the Kolhan. In other districts, accusations of witchcraft are still frequently made, and the persons denounced are subjected to much ill-usage, if they escape with their lives. Some of the Sokhas, instead of divining the name of the person who has cast the evil eye on the suffering patient, profess to summon their own familiar spirits who impart to them the needed information. The Sokha throws some rice on a winnowing sieve and places a light in front of it. He then mutters incantations and rubs the rice, watching the flame, and when this flickers, it is owing to the presence of the familiar, and the Sokha to whom alone the spirit is visible pretends to receive from it the revelation which he communicates to the enquirer to the effect that the sufferer is afflicted by the familiar of some rival Sokha or sorcerer or witch whom he names. The villagers then cause the attendance of the person denounced, who is brought into the presence of the sufferer and ordered to haul out his evi spirit. It is useless for him to plead that he has no such spirit, this only leads to his being unmercifully beaten, his best line of defence is to admit what is laid to his charge and to act as if he really were master of the situation ; some change for the better in the patient may take place, this is ascribed to his delivery from the familiar, and the sorcerer is allowed to depart ; but if there is no amelioration in the condition of the sick person, the chastisement of the sorcerer is continued till he [200] can bear no more, and not unfrequently he dies under the ill-treatment he is subjected to or from its effects.

A milder method is, when the person denounced is required to offer sacrifices of animals to appease or drive away the possessing devil ; this he dare not refuse to do, and if the sickness thereupon ceases, it is of course concluded that the devil has departed ; but if it continue, the sorcerer is turned out of his home and driven from the village, if nothing worse is done to him.

It must not be supposed that these superstitions are confined to the Kols, they are common to all classes of the population of this province. I have noticed in my account of the Agarias their prevalence in the Southern Tributary Mahals, and the alleged existence of secret witch schools, where damsels of true Aryan blood are instructed in the black art, and perfected in it by practice on forest trees. Even Brahmans are sometimes accused. I find in a report by Major Roughsedge, written in 1818, an account of a Brahman lady who was denounced as a witch and tried, and having escaped in the ordeal by water, she was found to be a witch, and deprived of her nose.

The Sokha does not always denounce a fellow-being ; he sometimes gives out that the family *bhut* is displeased and has caused the sickness ; and in such cases a most extensive propitiatory offering is demanded, which the master of the house provides, and of which the Sokha gets the lion's share ; and I find an instance of the oracle giving out that Desauli, the village *bhut*, had caused the trouble ; but on further enquiry, it was averred that a spiteful old woman had on this occasion demoralised the honorable and respectable guardian of the village, and though he was propitiated, the hag was made to suffer very severely for her malignancy.

It will be seen that it is not only women that are accused of having dealings with the imps of darkness. Persons of the opposite sex are as frequently denounced ; nor are the female victims invariably of the orthodox old hag type. In a recent case, eight women were denounced by a Sokha as witches, who had introduced epidemic cholera into the village, and caused a terrible mortality, and among these were some very young girls. They were ill-treated until they admitted all that was imputed to them, and agreed to point out and remove the spells they had prepared. They pretended to search for dead birds which, it was said, they had deposited as charms, but nothing was produced, and one of the poor creatures, fearing further ill-usage, destroyed herself by jumping into a well.

In Singbhum the wild Kharrias are looked upon as the most expert sorcerers, and the people, though they not unfrequently seek their aid, hold them in great awe.

The Hos and other tribes have a firm belief that there are magicians who have the power to assume at will the form of a beast of prey, and the person who gains this unenviable notoriety, is naturally one against whom every man's hand is raised. A Kol, tried for the murder of one of these wizards, stated in his defence (and he spoke as if he believed implicitly what he was narrating), that his wife having been killed by a tiger in his presence, he stealthily followed the anima as it glided away after gratifying its appetite, and saw that it entered the house of one Pusa, al Kol, whom he knew. He called out Pusa's relatives, and when they heard his story, they not only credited it, but declared they had long suspected Pusa of such power and acts ; and entering his house, where they found him and not the tiger, they delivered him bound **[201]** into the hands of his accuser, who at once slew him. In explanation of their having so acted, they deposed that Pusa had one night devoured an entire goat, and roared like a tiger whilst he was eating it ; and on another occasion, he informed his friends that he had a longing for a particular bullock, and that night that very bullock was killed by a tiger !

Omens : I have alluded to their belief in omens, which are always studied before any important step in life is taken, but from the attention paid to them, when the preliminaries of a marriage are being arranged, it is clear that the parties I am describing regard the choice of a wife as the most important step that they have to take. A very full list of these omens will be found in Volume IX of the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*. A few as specimens will suffice here.

If the cry of a flying squirrel is heard by the deputation on their route to view the bride, it is so bad an omen that no further steps are taken.

If on the road the branch of a tree falls without apparent cause, the death of the parents of both parties may be soon looked for if the marriage take place.

If the dung-beetle is seen on the path rolling his disproportionately large ball of dung, it portends poverty. It might have suggested industry and perseverance !

If certain birds light on the Asan tree,[46] or if snakes cross the path, it portends wealth.

A troop of Hanuman monkeys gives promise of larger herds of cattle.

If a bird lights on a *keond*, or ebony tree, the bride sought is sure to be a vixen.

Meeting women carrying full water-pots is auspicious, with empty water-pots the reverse.

Food : The Hinduised Munda abstains from most meats which Hindus consider impure, but it is not safe to place a fat capon in his way. Other Mundas and all the Hos eat beef, mutton, goat's flesh, fowls, fish, hares, and deer. Pigs are not much relished except by the poorest classes, and the flesh of bears, monkeys, snakes, field mice, and other small game that the Oraons and Santals affect, the Mundas and Hos do not approve of. They will take from our hands cakes, bread, and the like, but not cooked rice.

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[46] Terminalia tomentosa.

In regard to cooked rice these tribes are exceedingly particular. They will leave off eating if a man's shadow passes across their food. Very few of this people have been known to take to trade as a pursuit, but the Kols of one small section of Chutia Nagpur, Tamarh, known as Tamarias, are an exception. They are employed chiefly as brokers for the purchase of the produce of the wilder parts of the Kolhan ; but owing to extension of the market system, and a growing predilection on the part of the Kols for more direct dealings with the traders, the Tamarias' occupation as brokers is on the wane. The Singbhum Kols have of late years very generally taken to rearing the *tusser* silk-worm, and the money that they obtain by the sale of the cocoons goes a long way towards paying their revenue.

Law of inheritance : An equal division of property amongst the sons appears to be the prevailing custom of inheritance, but they live together as an undivided family until the youngest boy attains his majority, when the division is made. The sisters are regarded as live-stock and allotted to the brothers just as are the cattle. Thus, if a man dies, leaving three sons and three daughters and thirty head of [202] cattle, on a division each son would get ten head of cattle and one sister, but if there be only one sister they wait till she marries, and divide the *pan*.

Funeral ceremonies : The funeral ceremonies of the Hos are deserving of special notice, as they show great reverence for the dead ; and the variety and singularity of the rites performed may materially aid us in tracing the connection of the people we are describing. In my account of the Kasias, I have already drawn attention to the similarity between their funeral ceremonies and those of the Hos. The funeral rites of the Hos and Garos have also many points of resemblance.

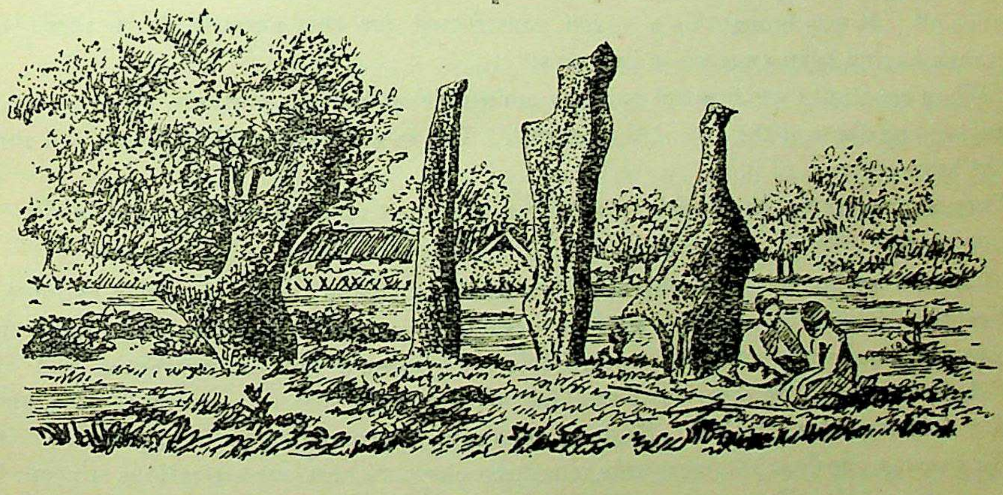
On the death of a respectable Ho or Munda, a very substantial coffin is constructed and placed on faggots of fire-wood. The body, carefully washed and anointed with oil and turmeric, is reverently laid in the coffin, and all the clothes, ornaments, and agricultural implements that the deceased was in the habit of using are placed with it, and also any money that he had about him when he died. Then the lid of the coffin is put on, and faggots placed around and above it, and the whole is burned.

The cremation takes place in front of the deceased's house. Next morning water is thrown on the ashes, search made for bones, and a few of the larger fragments are carefully preserved, whilst the remainder with the ashes are buried. The selected bones are placed in a vessel of earthen-ware, we may call it an urn, and hung up in the apartment of the chief mourner, generally the mother or widow, that she may have them continually in view, and occasionally weep over them. Thus they remain till the very extensive arrangements necessary for their final disposal are effected. A large tombstone has to be procured, and it is sometimes so ponderous that the men of several villages are employed to move it, and some wealthy men, knowing that their successors may not have the same influence that they possess, select, during their life-time, a suitable monument to commemorate their worth, and have it moved to a handy position to be used when they die. When required for use, it is brought to the family burial-place, which, with the Hos, is close to the houses, and near it a deep round hole is dug for the reception of the cinerary urn. When all is ready, a funeral party collect in front of the deceased's house, three or four men with very deep-toned drums, and a group of about eight young girls.

The chief mourner comes forth carrying the bones exposed on a decorated tray, and a procession is formed. The chief mourner with the tray leads, the girls form in two rows, those in front carry empty and partly broken pitchers and battered brass vessels, and the men with drums bring up the rear. The procession advances with a very ghostly dancing movement, slow and solemn as a minuet, in time to the beat of the deep-toned drums, not directly, but mysteriously gliding now right now left, now marking time, all in the same mournful cadence, a sad dead march.

The chief mourner carries the tray generally on her head, but at regular intervals she slowly lowers it, and as she does so the girls also gently lower and mournfully reverse the pitchers and brass vessels, and looking up for the moment with eyes full of tears, they seem to say, "Ah ! see ! they are empty."

In this manner the remains are taken to the house of every friend and relative of the deceased within a circle of a few miles and to every house in the village, and as the procession approaches each habitation in the weird-like manner described, the inmates all come out, and the tray having been placed on the ground at their door, they kneel over it and mourn, shedding tears on the remains as their last tribute of affection to their [203] deceased friend. The bones are thus also conveyed to all his favorite haunts, to the fields he cultivated, to the grove he planted, to the tank he excavated, to the threshing floor where he worked with his people, to the 'Akhra,' or dancing arena, where he made merry with them, and each spot which is hallowed with reminiscences of the deceased draws forth fresh tears from the mourners. In truth, there is a reality in their sadness that would put to shame the efforts of our undertakers and the purchased gravity of the best mutes, and it is far less noisy and more sincere than the Irish 'keening.' When this part of the ceremony is completed, the procession returns to the village and slowly gyrating round the great slab, gradually approaches its goal. At last it stops, a



Memorial Stones, at Pokuria, 4 miles south of Chibasa.
The highest stone is eight feet four inches above ground.

quantity of rice, cooked and uncooked, and other food, is now cast into the grave, and the charred fragments of bone transferred from the tray to a new earthen vessel placed over it. The hole is then filled up and covered with the large slab which effectually closes it against desecration. The slab, however, does not rest on the ground, but on smaller stones which raise it a little.

With the Mundas as among the Kasias these slabs may cover the graves of several members of a family, but the ghost of a Ho likes to have his grave all to himself.

A collection of these massive grave stones indelibly mark the site of every Ho or Mundari village, and they may now be found so marking sites in parts of the country where there have been no Kols for ages ; but in addition to the slab on the tomb, a megalithic monument is set up to the memory of the deceased in some conspicuous spot outside the village. The pillars vary in height from five or six to fiteen feet, and apparently fragments of rock of the most fantastic shape are most favored. Close to the station of Chaibasa on the road to Keonjhur may be seen a group of cenotaphs of unusual size, one elven feet two inches, another thirteen feet, and a third fourteen feet above the earth ; and many others of smaller dimensions. The groups of such stones that have come under my observation in the Munda and Ho country are always in line. The circular arrangement so common elsewhere I have not seen.

The subjoined sketch with which I have been kindly favored by Mr. Ball of the Geological Survey of India will give the reader a clear conception of the appearance [204] of these cenotaphs. It will be seen that some are almost grotesque in form. The stone No. 1 in the sketch is to the memory of Khundapater, the father of Paseng, the present Manki of Pokuria, Nos. 2 and 3 are in memory of Kanchi and Samari, young daughters of the Manki, and No. 4 in memory of his son.

Among the horizontal slabs under the tamarind trees in the village of Pokuria, Mr. Ball noticed one over the grave of Seni, a former wife of Paseng. It measured 17 feet 2 inches in length. Its greatest width was 9 feet 2 inches and thickness from 10 inches to a foot. Its weight was estimated at about six tons. This slate was procured in the bed of a river about three miles off. It was brought on a wagon constructed for the purpose, from three to four hundred men having been engaged in its transit.

When cenotaphs are first set up, they appear rising from an earthen platform on which it is supposed the ghost of the departed may rest. This is gradually washed away, and the older monoliths have no trace of it.

When stones are not procurable, wooden posts are put up supporting carved wooden images of birds or beasts.

I think that Mundas who embrace Christianity might be allowed to retain as much of the above beautiful funeral ceremonial as they wish to preserve. There is nothing in it repugnant to our own religious sentiments. In truth, I think it evinces a greater reverence and affection for the deceased than the hurried burial out of our sight that we ourselves adopt, and in all probability it is the oldest method. Sanitary requirements compel us to forego the old revered custom of burying our dead in graveyards round the church where our aspirations to meet them again are expressed, but if we took example from the Kols we might revert without danger to this time-honored custom of our forefathers, and Christian Kols conserving the ancient practice would retain their picturesque burial grounds under the tamarind trees in the village, or set up memorial stones round their village churches.

Hades : I do not find that the present generation of Kols have any conception of a heaven or a hell that may not be traced to Brahmanical or Christian teaching. They have some vague idea that the ghosts of the dead hover about, and they make offerings to them, and some have like the Chinese an altar in the house on which a portion of the 'daily bread' is offered to them ; but unless under a system of prompting often inadvertently adopted, they will not tell you that this after existence is one of reward or punishment.

Oaths : When a Ho swears, the oath has no reference whatever to a future state. He prays that if he speak not the truth, he may be afflicted with as many calamities as befell Job, that he may suffer the loss of all his worldly wealth, his health, his wife, his children, that he may sow without reaping or reap without gathering, and finally, that he may be devoured by a tiger. It is a tremendous oath, and it is a shame to impose the obligation of making it on so generally truthful a people ; but they swear not by any hope of happiness beyond the grave ; and the miserable wandering life they assign to the shades can only be looked forward to with dread. They fear the ghosts and propitiate them as spirits of a somewhat malignant nature, but can have no possible desire to pass into such a state of existence themselves.

The funeral ceremonies I have described are what I myself witnessed. Colonel Tickell tells us that on the evening of the burning of the corpse certain preparations are [205] made in the house in anticipation of a visit from the ghost. A portion of the boiled rice is set apart for it,—the commencement, we may presume, of the daily act of family devotion above noticed,—and ashes are sprinkled on the floor, in order that should it come its footprints may be detected. The inmates then leave the house and, circumambulating the pyre, invoke the spirit. Returning, they carefully scrutinise the ashes and rice, and if there is the faintest indication of these having been disturbed, it is at once attributed to the return of the spirit, and they sit down apart shivering with horror and crying bitterly as if they were by no means pleased with the visit, though made at their earnest solicitation.

I have often asked the Kols if their custom of casting money, food, and raiment on the funeral pyre, is at all connected with ideas of the resurrection of the body, or if they thought the dead would benefit by the gifts bestowed. They have always answered in the negative, and gave me the same explanation of the origin and object of the custom that I received from the Chulikata Mishmis of Upper Asam.[47] They are unwilling to derive any immediate benefit from the death of a member of their family ; they wish for no such consolation in their grief. So they commit to the flames all his personal effects, the clothes and vessels he had used, the weapons he carried, and the money he had about him ; but new things that have not been used are not treated as things that he appropriated, and they are not destroyed ; and it often happens that respectable old Hos abstain from wearing new garments that they become possessed of, to save them from being wasted at the funeral.

When the interment of the bones is accomplished, the event is made known far and wide by explosions that sound like discharges from heavy guns. This is sometimes done through the agency of gunpowder, but more frequently by the application of heat and cold to fragments of schistose rock, causing them to split with loud noises.

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[47] Vide page [21.]

In summing up the character of the people I have been describing, it is necessary to separate the Hos from their cognates ; the circumstances under which the character of the former has been developed are different, and they are, in my opinion, physically and morally superior to the Mundas, Bhumij, and Santals.

They appear to me to possess a susceptibility of improvement not found in the other tribes. They have been directly under our government for about thirty-seven years, and coming to us as unsophisticated savages, we have endeavoured to civilize without allowing them to be contaminated, and whilst they still retain those traits which favorably distinguish the aborigines of India from Asiatics of higher civilization, a manner free from servility, but never rude, a love. or at least the practice, of truth, a feeling of self-respect rendering them keenly sensitive under rebuke, they have become less suspicious, less revengeful, less blood-thirsty, less contumacious, and in all respects more amenable to the laws of the realm and the advice of their officers.

They are still very impulsive, easily excited to rash, headstrong action, and apt to resent imposition or oppression without reflection, but the retaliation which often extends to a death-blow is done on the spur of the moment and openly, secret assassination being a crime almost unthought of by them. As a fair illustration of their mode of action when violently incensed I give the following :—

A Bengali trader accustomed to carry matters with a very high hand among his compatriots in the Jungle Mahals, demanded payment of a sum of money due to him by [206] a Ho, and not receiving it, proceeded to sequestrate and drive off a pair of bullocks, the property of his debtor. The Ho on this took to his arms, let fly an arrow which brought down the money-lender, whose head he then cut off, went with it in his hand straight to the Deputy Commissioner, and explainining to that officer exactly what had occurred, requested, that he might be condemned for the crime without more ado ! Murders are not now more frequent in the Kolhan than in other districts, latterly less so ; but when one does take place, the perpetrator is seldom at any trouble to conceal himself or his crime.

The pluck of the Hos displayed in their first encounter with our troops and former wars, I have often seen exemplified on minor occasions. In competitive games they go to work with a will, and a strenuous exertion of their full force, unusual in natives of India. Once at the Ranchi Fair there was a race of carriages often used by travellers in Chutia Nagpur drawn and propelled by men. One of these came from Singbhum and had a team of Hos ; a collision took place early in the race, and the arm of one of the Ho team was badly fractured. It fell broken by his side, but he still held on to the shaft of the carriage, and cheering and yelling like the rest went round the course.

The extreme sensitiveness of both men and women is sometimes very painfully exhibited in the analysis of the numerous cases of suicide that every year occur. A harsh word to a woman never provokes a retort, but it causes in the person offensively addressed, a sudden depression of spirits or vehement outbreak of grief, which few persons would a second time care to provoke. If a girl appears mortified by anything that has been said, it is not safe to let her go away till she is soothed. A reflection on a man's honesty or veracity may be sufficient to send him to self-destruction. In a recent case, a young woman attempted to poison herself, because her uncle would not partake of the food she had cooked for him. The police returns of Singbhum show that in nine years, from 1860 to 1869, both inclusive, 186 men and women committed suicide in that district.

I have already spoken of them as good husbands and wives, but in all the relations of life their manner to each other is gentle and kind. I never saw girls quarrelling, and never heard them abuse or say unkind things of each other, and they never coarsely abuse and seldom speak harshly to women. The only exception I know is when they believe a woman to be a witch ; for such a one they have no consideration. They have no terms in their own language to express the higher emotions, but they feel them all the same.

The Mundaris are not so truthful and open as the Hos, nor do I consider them, as a rule, so manly and honest ; but then the Mundas have lived for ages under conditions ill-calculated to develop the good qualities for which I have given the Hos credit. There has been a continued struggle to maintain what they consider their right in the land against the adverse interest of the landlord or his assigns. The very conditions under which most of them hold their lands place them in a position of dependence and inferiority, as they have to labour for their landlord as well as pay rent to him. Moreover, they live among a people who look down on them as a degraded race, and one of whose favorite theories is, that the Kols were created to serve them. This, no doubt, must be as demoralising as it is aggravating, and in many places the [207] Mundaris and Oraons have listened to it so long that they begin to accept the doctrine, and calmly subside into the position of serfdom allotted to them.

The licentiousness indulged in by Mundaris and Hos at their great festival is of course incompatible with purity and chastity, and there is no doubt that the majority of the elders are terrible sots ; but in Singbhum the rising generation show a disposition to abandon sottish and licentious habits, and it is satisfactory to know that they can be entirely weaned from them. About seven thousand Mundas have now embraced Christianity, and recently the movement has extended to the Hos of Singbhum. One of the Mankis with all his family and a considerable number of his villagers have been bapitzed, and, generally speaking, all those who have embraced our religion have entirely withdrawn from participation in the wild revelry of their pagan brethren. Their pastors have made this a test of their sincerity, and it is no doubt a very severe one. The women must lay aside all their trinkets, and should not be seen, even as spectators, at dances. The last condition is too hard, and is, I know, frequently evaded ; but the first is readily acquiesced in, and native female converts look with astonishment at the jewelry displayed on the persons of European ladies even in church, and wondering ask—"Have they been baptized ?"

In regard to breaches of chastity and sins against modesty which I have noticed, it is to be observed that whatever is done on these convivial occasions is confined to their own people. The instances of Munda or Ho girls committing themselves to acts of impropriety with males of another tribe are exceedingly rare, and such a thing as prostitution or its baneful effects is entirely unknown among them. It is, I think, true that the race generally are duller of comprehension and more difficult to teach than Hindus or Muhammadans, and with the exception of those who embrace Christianity, the Mundas are usually unwilling to learn ; but the Hos have of late years evinced considerable interest in education, and the progress they make is satisfactory, their anxiety to learn and wonderful diligence making up for sluggishness in intellect.

SECTION 6.—THE SANTALS

Geographical Distribution : The Santals are found at intervals, sometimes in considerable masses, but more generally much scattered, in a strip of Bengal, extending for about 350 miles from the Ganges to the Baitarni, bisected by the meridian of Bhagalpur or 87° east ongitude, and comprising the following districts :—Bhagalpur, the Santal Parganas, Birbhum, Bancura, Hazaribagh, Manbhum, Mednipur, Singbhum, Mayurbhanj, and Balasore. The Santal Parganas, or Santalia, said to contain upwards of two hundred thousand Santals, may now be regarded as the nucleus of the tribe, but it does not appear to have been one of their original seats. Buchanan Hamilton, in describing the Hill tribes of Bhagalpur and its vicinity, makes no mention of Santals. The aboriginal tribes he fell in with are called 'Malers,' the Rajmahal Hill men proper and their kindred, a Dravidian people. It is singular that no old colonies of Santals or other Kolarian tribes are found between the Himalayas and the Ganges. The Santal settlements that now border on that river or skirt the Rajmahal Hills are readily traced back to more southern districts, and their own traditions hardly support the theory of their northern origin. Indeed, when we find that the Kolarian races **[208]** have left their trail in Asam, that it may be followed throughout the Siam States and Burma to the Pegu district, and is faintly discerned in the adjoining islands, that it may be taken up at Point Palmyras and clearly traced along both banks of the Damudar river till it reaches the hills and table-land of Chutia Nagpur, it is scarcely reasonable to assume that they have all come direct from the Himalayas. The Damudar, rising in Palamau, divides the Hazaribagh and Chutia Nagpur plateaus, and draining the nothern face of the one and the southern face of the other, discharges itself into the Hughli, near the mouth of the latter river. It is the terrestrial object most venerated by the Santals ; and the country that is most closely associated with their name, which they apparently regard as their fatherland, is between that river and the Kasai.

There is no doubt, however, that Santals colonised parts of the Hazaribagh district and parts of Birbhum at a very remote period, and it is chiefly by migrations from those colonies that the modern Santalia has been formed.

The Deman-i-koh : In 1832[48] a considerable impetus was given to the northward movement in the action taken by Government to secure to the Rajmahal Highlanders their possessions in the hills that form the turning point of the Ganges at Sahibganj. To prevent the encroachments of the lowland zamindars of the Bhagalpur district, which were constantly exciting reprisals from the Highlanders, a tract of country measuring nearly three hundred miles in circumference was separated and marked off by large masonry pillars, and of all the land within those pillars the Government was declared to be head proprietor, and the Hill people were informed that their rights in it would be respected so long as they conducted themselves peaceably. But the Hillmen only cared for the highlands and the tract included within the pillars called the Daman-i-koh, or skirts of the hills, and the valleys running into the hills were available for other settlers, and were speedily taken up by Santals. In a few years the Santal population in the Daman had increased from three thousand to eighty-three thousand souls, when the colony received a check by the Santal insurrection of 1854.

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[48] See "Notes on a Tour through the Rajmahal Hills," by Colonel Walter Sherwill, *Journal, Asiatic Society of Bengal*, No. VII of 1851.

For a history of this rebellion and the causes that led to it the reader may be referred to Mr. Hunter's interesting volume, called '*Rural Bengal*'. The Santals, starting with the desire to revenge themselves on the money-lenders who had taken advantage of their simplicity and improvidence, found themselves arrayed in arms against the British Government and it was not without bloodshed that the insurrection was suppressed ; but it led to their being re-established under a more genial administration in what are called the Santal Parganas. In the Daman-i-koh their own form of self-government is to some extent restored to them. The villages are farmed to the headmen, called Manjhis, who are also the sole guardians of the peace, a system that had been already introduced with success into the Kolhan of Singbhum.

Nomadic habits : In marked contrast to the Kolarians of the Munda and Ho divisions, the Santals, as a rule, care little for permanently locating themselves. A country denuded of the primeval forest which affords them the hunting grounds they delight in and the virgin soil they prefer, does not attract them ; and when, through their own labor, the spread of cultivation has effected this denudation, they select a new site, however prosperous they may have been on the old, and retire into the **[209]** backwoods, where their harmonious flutes sound sweeter, their drums find deeper echoes, and their bows and arrows may once more be utilized. The traditions of their ancient migrations are rendered obscure by the succession of dissolving views to which this nomadic habit introduces us, but they nevertheless tenaciously cling to a wild and remote tradition of their origin ; and though much scattered and intermingled with other races whose creeds and customs they have partially adopted, they are characterised by many old practices that they lovingly cling to, and they are one of the tribes which has preserved the form of speech that in all probability predominated in the Gangetic provinces before the Aryan conquest.

Houses : But though prone to change, the Santals are not indifferent to their personal comfort, and are more careful in the construction of their homesteads and villages than their cognates. Their huts, with carefully formed mud walls and well raised plinths and snug verandahs, have a neat, and, owing to their love of colour, even a gay appearance. They paint their walls in alternate broad stripes of red, white, and black—native clays and charcoal furnishing the pigments ; moreover, the houses are kept perfectly clean, and by partitions decent accomodation for the family is provided.

In the situation of their villages they generally seek insulation, and would gladly, if they could, exclude all foreigners, especially Brahmans ; but as they clear lands that they do not care to retain and render habitable, regions that wild beasts would without them be sole lords of, they are soon followed into their retreat by the more crafty and enterprising Hindu, and the result often is they have to submit to, or give way to, the intruders. It frequently happens that the Hindu intruder improving on the Santal cultivation and making more money by it, obtains from the landlord a lease of the village at a rent the Santal would not think of paying or demanding, and so the pioneers of civilization are prematurely forced to move on.

The Santals have of late been the most honored of the aboriginal races in Bengal in the attention that enquirers have directed towards them. In Mr. Mann's monograph we have an interesting account of their social state, and in the work by Mr. Hunter, above alluded to, an elaborate and admirably written essay on their religion, customs, and language, that have made them, no doubt, the best generally known of our Bengal non-Aryans ; but instead of following these accounts, I will give the information I have myself collected about the Santals in this province.

Vast numbers of the Santals now settled in Santalia emigrated within the last century from the Hazaribagh district, but there are still large settlements of the tribe in Kharakdia to the north of Parisnath, and in the hill country between Gola and the Damudar ; and some intelligent and influential head men, called Parganaits. One of these, Bagh Rai Parganait, from a Damudar settlement, gives me orally the following version of the mythical origin and progress of the tribe.

Legends : BAGH RAI'S NARRATIVE.—"A wild goose coming from the great ocean alighted at Ahiri Pipri, and there laid two eggs. From these two eggs a male and female were produced, who were the parents of the Santal race. From Ahiri Pipri our progenitors migrated to Hara Duttie, and there they greatly increased and multiplied, and were called Kharwars. Thence they removed to Khairagarh and Hurredgarhi, and eventually settled in Chai Champa in the Hazaribagh district, where they remained for several generations.

[210] "There were many Birhors in that country (they are still to be found there), and one of them seduced a Santal girl ; she bore a child and cast it on a dung-heap, where it was found by the Paramanik and Jag Manjhi ; they brought it home and fostered it, and the child grew up and became a very powerful man, whom no one could withstand, and he demanded a wife. They said that no Santal girl should ever marry the son of a Birhor. Then the strong man, to whom they had given the Hindu name of Madhu Singh, declared he would violate all the Santal virgins, if one were not bestowed on him in marriage. The Santals above all things regard the honor of their maidens, and greatly alarmed at this threat, they resolved to abandon Chai Champa to be rid of Madhu Singh. In one night they all left with their women and children, cattle and moveables, and proceeding to Chutia Nagpur, the country of the Mundas, they came to Marang Buru (the great mountain), the god of that people, and prayed to him that Madhu Singh and the Birhors might not be permitted to overtake them, and he interposing his great mass between them and their pursuers (the path wound up a steep ghat and round from the north to the south side of the mountain), effectually protected them. Thus our fathers became votaries of Marang Buru, the god of the Mundas, offering sacrifices of goats to him, and we continue to worship him to this day, assigning to him a place in the sacred grove with Jahir Era and Monika. Our ancestors made no sojourn in Nagpur, but went on to Jhalda, then in possession of the Mundas, though now the Hindu Kurmis hold it." [This si confirmed by the fact that all the old village sites in Jhalda are marked by the indelible monolithic monuments of the Mundas.] "They next tried Patkum, but found no resting place among the Bhumij, and pushed on to Saont, and finding much forest there, settled and built good houses and began to enjoy themselves, according to our custom, and to dance, play, and sing. But the Saont Raja, seeing our maidens dancing, took a fancy to them, and demanded that one should be given to him. This was refused, and the people dreading the consequence of refusal, left the Saont country and went to Sikhar. It was from our long sojourn in Saont that we took the name of Santal ; we were previously called Kharwars. We formed numerous villages in what is now the eastern part of the Manbhum district ; but as we increased and the jungle disappeared, colonies of our people went west and took up Sonabadi and Guttiari in the Gola Pargana (Hazaribagh district) and Sikhar, through which the Damudar flows. My ancestor was the leader of the colony that took up Sonabadi. There were many Kharwar Rajas in those days, and one was established at Gola, to whom my ancestor paid tribute. In the time of my grandfather, Kangal Parganoit, the Ghatwali system was introduced (that is, they were required to protect the roads and passes), and it was in his time that the English were first seen in our country. One of them carrying a red stick, and thence called Lal-lathi, came to Sonabadi. He had followers with brass-engraved plates on their breasts and two strange looking dogs, and he asked for the head man, and when my grandfather appeared, they tied him up and ordered him to point out land on which a bungalow could be built, and on my grandfather giving the land he was released. There was much iron ore lying about. Lal-lathi immediately set the smelters at work, made quantities of iron and sent it all out of the country."

Thus briefily and quaintly Bagh Rai tells, according to his light, the history of his race from the creation to the establishment of British rule. The delineation of the first bold Briton that appeared amongst them, energetic and practical, is evidently **[211]** a life picture. The explanation regarding Lal-lathi is probably nothing more than a Santal gloss on the word 'Wilayati', foreigner. The tradition that Bagh Rai gives of the origin of his race will be found at length, though somewhat differently told, in Mr. Hunter's '*Rural Bengal*' and Mr. Mann's work. If as is not impossible, the Santals crossed the Bay of Bengal in coming to India, the wild goose may be the white sailed vessel that bore them. The more detailed versions of the legend have been obviously filled in from Brahmanical sources. The Santals now speak of the Damudar as their sea, and the ceremonies in honour of their dead are always considered incomplete till some charred fragment of the burnt body is committed to the stream to be borne away to the ocean.

I am unable to identify the Ahiri Pipri, but Khairagarh and Chai Champa are in the Hazaribagh or Ramgarh district, and to Chai Champa remote Santals, as well as those in this district, frequently allude.

At Chai there is an old fort, the walls of which, of earth and stones, enclose a space of about five acres of land. The tradition about it is, that it was the abode of Jangra, a Santal Raja, who destroyed bimself and his family on hearing of the approach of a Muhammadan army under General Sayyid Ibrahim Ali,[49] alias Malik Baya. A Muhammadan Officer named

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[49] He is also called Malik Bayu, and was a General of Muhammad Tughluk. He died in the second year of Firuzshah's reign, on the 13th Zil Hajjah, 753 A.H., or 20th January, 1353 A.D. His tomb is in the town of Bihar. The legends of the district frequently mention his name.

Hazrat Fath Khan Duala was placed in charge of the fort, and on his dying there, a place of worship of 'Darga' was erected near his grave. There is another fort at Mangarh, four miles from Bhai, which is also assigned by tradition to a Santal chief called Man Singh. He abandoned his fort on the approach of the Muhammadans. At and about Chai it is said that there were formerly six Santal chiefs, three in Bihar and three in the Hazaribagh district.

Saont : Saont, supposed to have given the Santals their present name, is Silda in Mednipur. About the time that I was transcribing Bagh Rai's narrative, my friend Babu Rakhaldas Haldhar, Assistant Commissioner, Chutia Nagpur, was, at my request, making some enquiries regarding Santals in the eastern district, and without having heard what Bagh Rai had stated, he wrote to ask me if this might not be the place where the Santals first settled. He tells me that Pargana Silda, in which the Santals still predominate, is properly called Samanta Bhumi, and that Chatna, adjoining it, but in the Manbhum district, is admittedly a corruption of the same name. Whether this name was first given to that part of the country in consequence of its being inhabited by 'Saontals', or that the people took the name from the country as stated by Bagh Rai, I cannot tell ; but putting together all the facts and legends that we possess, it is probable that the Santals were originally located in Eastern Bengal from the sea-coast inwards , and that colonies were gradually pushed on to the Hazaribagh district, or to Chai Champa and Kharakdia, and from thence northward, and that Bagh Rai's account of their movement eastward from Chai Champa to Saont through Chutia Nagpur is the reverse of what took place.

Relationship with the Kharwars : Another very remarkable circumstance touched on by Bagh Rai is the implied relationship between the Santals and Kharwars. In writing about the latter long before I had seen Bagh Rai (*vide* page [130], I gave some reasons for suspecting such a relationship, and Mr. Mann and Mr. Hunter [212] both note that Kharwar, or a name like it, is an old name of the Santals. In the traditions of Bihar and Shahabad, as given in Buchanan Hamilton's work, the Cheros, Kols, and Kharwars are blended together, and it is probable that the Santals are not wrong in claiming relationship with the Kharwars, but by their own account the Santals have never played a prominent role in history ; always clinging to the skirts of hills and forests and constantly shifting, they appear never to have advanced beyond the polity of a village community. Ignoring all relationship with other Kolarians, they yet have no tradition that they ever formed a nation or had a Raja or ruler of their own ; and though great vocalists and melodists, they have no song commemorative of ancient glory. When they rose in 1855 A.D., it is probable that they contemplated no more than the extermination of their tormentors, the money-lenders. It is at all events the first time we hear of them in revolt, though so constantly migrating to avoid oppression. I cannot but think that the Mundas and Hos, who tenaciously cling to their holdings and have always shown themselves ready to fight for them if necessary, must have the prestige of superior birth. There are many reasons for supposing that the Cheros, who were a ruling race, and the Mundas and Hos, are of the same stock, but the Santals and Kharwars may have become one people with them after having been subjugated.

The Santals, like the Kharwars, belong to, or have mixed much with, the dark races of India. The Cheros, Hos, and Mundas are, on the whole, fairer and preserve more distinctly traits of the Tartar type.

Physical traits : The Santals are noticeable for a great vagueness in the chiselling of the features, a general tendency to roundness of outline where sharpness is more conducive to beauty, a blubbery style of face, and both in male and female a greater tendency to corpulency than we meet in their cognates. Their faces are almost round ; cheekbones moderately prominent ; eyes full and straight, not obliquely set in the head ; nose, if at all prominent, of somewhat a retroussee style, but generally broad and depressed ; mouth large, and lips very full and projecting ; hair straight and coarse and black. Mr. Mann notes of them, and I concur in the remark that their cast of countenance almost approaches the Negro type. The females, he says, have small hands and feet, and are ox-eyed, and these are characteristics which the tribes linguistically allied to them do not possess. Mr. Hunter describes them as about the same height as the ordinary Hindu, but I should feel inclined to consider them as rather below that standard ; he further well characterises[50] them, as "created to labour rather than to think, better fitted to serve the manual exigencies of the present than to speculate on the future or venerate the past."

Tribal divisions : The Santals, like the Israelites, are divided into twelve tribes : 1, Saran ; 2, Murmu ; 3, Marli ; 4, Kisku ; 5, Besera ; 6, Hansda ; 7, Tudi : 8, Baski ; 9, Hemrow ; 10, Karwar ; 11, Chorai ; 12, * * Except No. 11, the above agree with the nomenclature of tribal divisions of Santal tribes given in Mr. Mann's work ; numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, and 11 with the names of the seven sons of the first parents in Mr. Hunter's essay. Numbers 2, 3, 6, 9 and 11 are found in the list of the tribes of the Singbhum Larka Kols, or Hos. This is remarkable, as the legends of origin handed down among the Larkas have little in [213] common with the traditions of the Santals ; and though the former also assign twelve sons to the first parents, they were the primogenitors, not of the various tribes, or *kilis*, of Hos, but of different familes of mankind, including Hindus and Santals, the latter being the offspring of the youngest pair, who, when told to separate from the family, selected pig as their staple food. The names given above include only one to which a meaning is attached, 'Murmu,' which signifies the Nilgao, *Portax (Antelope) pictus*, and the Murmus may not kill the animal whose name they adopt, nor touch its flesh.

Polity : The polity of the Santals is very patriarchal. In each village there is, 1st, a Jagmanjhi, whose most important duty is apparently to look after the morals of the boys and girls, and if he is at all straightlaced, they must often lead him a hard life of it ; 2nd, a Paramanik, whose business it is to attend to the farming arrangements and to apportion the lands. He disallows any monopoly of peculiarly fertile rice lands ; all must take their share of good and bad. He has to look after the interests of new settlers and to provide for guests, levying contributions for the purpose on the villagers. All the offices are hereditary ; when a new settlement is formed the office bearers are elected, after that the next of kin succeeds. There is a village priest who is called Naia (Nayaka, *vulgo* Laya). This is a word of Sanskrit derivation and as they have no name in their own language for such a functionary, it is probably not an original institution. He has lands assigned to him, but out of the profits of his estate he has to feast the people twice in the year—at the festival of the Sarhul, held towards the end of March, when the Sal tree blossoms, and at the Moi Muri festival, held in the month of Asin (September-October), for a blessing on the crops.

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[50] *'Rural Bengal'*, page 146.

Festivals : At the Sohrai feast, the harvest home, in December, the Jag-manjhi entertains the people, and the cattle are anointed with oil and daubed with vermilion, and a share of the *handia*, rice beer, is given to each animal. Every third year in most houses, but in some every fourth or fifth year, the head of the family offers a goat to the sun god 'Sing Bonga' for the prosperity of the family, especially of the children, "that they may not be cut off by disease, or fall into sin." The sacrifice is offered at sunrise on any open space cleaned and purified for the occasion.

The supreme deity : A very important distinction is observed by all the Kolarians in the motive of the sacrifices to the supreme deity and those by which the minor gods are propitiated. To Sing Bonga the sacrifice is to secure a continuance of his mercies and for preservation. The other deities are resorted to when disease or misfortune visit the family, the sacrifice being to propitiate the spirit who is supposed to be afflicting or punishing them.

Worship of ancestral manes : Ancestors are worshipped, or rather their memory is honored, at the time of the Sohrai festival, and offerings made at home by each head of a family. In the meantime the Naia propitiates the local devils, *bhuts*. In many villages the Santals join with the Hindus in celebrating the Durga Puja, the great festival in honor of Devi, and the Holi in honor of Krishna. Their own priests take no part in the ceremonial observances at those Hindu feasts ; they are left to the Brahmans.

Priestly functions : The person or persons who have to offer sacrifices at the Santal feasts have to prepare themselves for the duty by fasting and prayer and by placing themselves for some time in a position of apparent mental absorption. The beating of drums appears at last to arouse them, and they **[214]** commence violently shaking their heads and long hair till they work themselves into a real or apparent state of involuntary or spasmodic action, which is the indication of their being possessed. They may then give oracular answers to interrogatories regarding the future, or declare the will of the spirit invoked or about to be propitiated. When the demoniacal possession appears to have reached its culminating point, the possessed men seize and decapitate the victims and pour the blood into vessels ready placed for its reception.

Minor deities : Among the Santals in Chutia Nagpur, Sing Bonga, the sun, is the supreme god, the creator and preserver. The other deities are 'Jahir Era', Monika, and Marang Buru, and they are all malignant and destructive. In the eastern districts the tiger is worshipped, but in Ramgarh only those who have suffered loss through that animal's ferocity condescend to adore him. If a Santal is carried off by a tiger, the head of the family deems it necessary to propitiate the 'Bagh Bhut' (tiger devil). Occasionally the villagers all join in sacrificing a bullock or buffalo to Marang Buru. They have no very clear conception to what Buru, or mountain, their devotions should be especially paid, but he is honored as Lord of the Jungles. The Santals further east adore deities and Chando Bonga, the moon god, and Bagh Bhut, the tiger ; and to be sworn on a tiger-skin is the most solemn of oaths.

Food : Santals who, under the example and precept of Bengali Hindus, have abjured some practices considered impure by the latter, are called Sat Santals, that is, pure Santals ; but there is a national antagonism between them and the Hindus that prevents any close fraternization or communion between the races. They are not over-particular about food, but nothing will induce them to eat rice cooked by a Hindu, even by a Brahman. Unfortunately during the famine of 1866 this was not known to us. The cooks who prepared the food distributed at the relief centres were all Brahmans, and it was supposed that this would suit all classes, but the Santals kept aloof, and died rather than eat from hands so hateful to them. They have no tradition to account for this bitter feeling. The animosity remains, though its cause is forgotten.

Social customs : The Santal parents have to undergo purification five days after childbirth ; a kind of gruel is prepared, and after a libation to Sing Bonga or Marang Buru, it is served out to the mother and the other members of the family. An eldest son is always named after his grandfather, other children after other relations. The Santals have adopted as a rite the tonsure of children and do not appear to recognise the necessity for any other ceremonial observance till their marriage when adult. Child marriage is not practised.

There is no separate dormitory for the boys and girls in a Santal village. Accommodation is decorously provided for them in the house of the parents, but the utmost liberty is given to the youth of both sexes. The old people, though affecting great regard for the honor of the girls, display great confidence in their virtue. Unrestrained they resort to markets, to festivals and village dances in groups ; and if late in the evening, they return under escort of the young men who have been their partners in the dances or have played to them ; no harm is thought of it.

Music : The peculiar emblem of the Santals should be the flute ; they are distinguished from all people in contact with them by their proficiency on that instrument. Made of bamboo not less than one inch in diameter, and two feet in length, they are equal in size to the largest of our concert flutes [215] and have deep rich tones. This faculty of playing the flute and a general knowledge of singing and dancing were, they say, imparted to them by their first parents, and it was also by their first parents that they were taught the mysteries of the home brew, and they therefore, consider there can be no great harm in freely indulging in it.

Dances : There is always reserved an open space in front of the Jag-manjhi's house as a dancing place. To this the young men frequently resort after the evening meal, and the sound of their flutes and drums soon attract the maidens, who smooth and adjust their long hair, and adding to it a flower or two, blithely join them.

It is singular that in this national amusement of the Santals we have handed down to us a most vivid living representation of one prominent scene in the sports of Krishna in Vraja and Vrindavana. There is nothing in modern Hindu life that at all illustrates the animated scenes so graphically delineated in the *Purans* ; but the description of the 'Rasa' dance in chapter XIII, book V, of the *Vishnu Puran*, might be taken literally as an account of the Santal 'Jumhir.' We have in both the maidens decked with flowers and ornamented with tinkling bracelets, the young men with garlands of flowers and peacocks' feathers, holding their hands and closely compressed, so that the breast of the girl touches the back of the man next to her, going round in a great circle, limbs all moving as if they belonged to one creature, feet falling in perfect cadence ; the dancers in the ring singing responsive to the musicians in the centre, who fluting, drumming, and dancing too are the motive power of the whole, and form an axis of the circular movement.

Thus, as the pivot for the dances, sometimes sported Krishna and his favorite companions, "making sweet melody with voices and flutes," but more frequently they took their places in the ring, "each feeling the soft pressure of two maidens in the great circling dance."

We are told that Krishna when he thought the lovely light of autumn propitious for the Rasa dance, with Rama commenced singing sweet low strains in various measures such as the Gopis (milkmaids) loved, and they as soon as they heard the melody quitted their homes and joined him ; just so, on a moonlight night, the Santal youth invite the Santal maidens. Professor Wilson, in his note on the passages of the *Vishnu Puran* referred to above, observes that the 'Ras Yatra' is celebrated in various parts of India in the month of Kartika (October) but that a circular dance of men and women does not form any prominent feature at these entertainments, and he doubts if it ever is performed. In the late autumn months the Kols and Oraons have numerous *yatras* or *jatras*, at which these circular dances are performed by thousands. I will revert to these *yatras* in describing the Oraons of Chutia Nagpur.[51]

Marriages: With such freedom of intercourse, it follows that marriages are generally love matches, and, on the whole, happy ones ; but it is considered more respectable if the arrangements are made by the parents or guardians without any acknowledged reference to the young people. The price to be paid for the girl, averaging five rupees, with presents of cloths to her parents, having been determined on, a day is fixed for a preliminary feast, and afterwards for the marriage itself, and a knotted string, which shows the number of days that intervene, is kept as a **[216]** memorandum. Each morning one of these knots is removed by the impatient lover, and when the last is loosened, the bridegroom and his friends with noisy music set out for the abode of the bride. As they approach the village, the Jag-manjhi comes out to meet them, attended by women with water to wash the feet of the guests, who are then escorted to the house of the bride, and the two mingling together merrily sing, dance, and feast in front of the bride's chamber. At the last quarter of the night, the bridegroom makes his appearance riding on the hip of one of his comrades, and soon after the bride is brought out by a brother or brother-in-law in a basket. Then comes the inevitable *sindra dan*. The groom daubs his lady-love on the crown and brow very copiously with vermilion (*sindur*), and the assembled guests applaud with cries of '*hari bol*.' The bride and groom who have fasted all the day now eat together, and this is supposed to be the first time that the girl has sat with a man at her food. It is creditable to the Kolarians that this custom has been retained through ages, notwithstanding the derision with which it is viewed by all Hindus. On the following day before the party breaks up, the young people are thus admonished by one of the sages—"Oh boy ! Oh girl ! you are from this day forth to comfort each other in sickness or sorrow. Hitherto you have only played and worked (as directed), now the responsibility of the household duties is upon you ; practise hospitality, and when a kinsman arrives wash his feet and respectfully salute him." No priest officiates during a Santal marriage. The social meal that the boy and girl eat together is the most important part of the ceremony, as by the act the girl ceases to belong to her father's tribe, and becomes a member of her husband's family.

Santals seldom have more than one wife, and she is treated with most exemplary kindness and consideration. Should the husband be for any reason, as her barrenness, induced to seek a second partner during her lifetime, the first wife is never deposed from her position as head of the household ; the second wife must obey her and serve her.

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[51] See also description of the dance of the Hayas, page [106].

Daily life : A ·Santal in prosperous seasons leads a pleasant life. He is either busy with his cultivation or playing his flute, or dancing with the girls, or engaged in the chase. He throws himself with ardour into the latter pursuit, and in hunting down beasts of prey he evinces great skill and powers of endurance and indomitable pluck. They have every year a great hunting festival in which thousands take part. These expeditions are organized with as much care and forethought, as if the hosts engaged in them were about to undertake a military campaign, and take place in the hot season, when the beasts have least cover to conceal themselves in.

Hunting expeditions : When the array of hunters reaches the ground on which operations against the wild beasts are to commence, they form a line of beaters several miles in length, every man armed with a bow and arrows and a battle-axe, and accompanied by dogs, who, though ugly creatures to look at, appear, like their masters, to be endowed with a true hunting instinct. When they emerge from the woods on open spaces, the game of all kinds that are driven before them suddenly appear. Birds take wing and are beaten down with ·sticks or shot with arrows ; quadrupeds, great and small, are similarly treated, and in this way deer, pig, jungle fowl, peafowl, hare, &c. are bagged ; but tigers and bears on these occasions of open warfare are generally avoided.

These hunting excursions last for four or five days, and at the end of each day the Santals feast merrily on the contents of their bags and thoroughly enjoy themselves. **[217]** Their rule in regard to possession of an animal killed is that it belongs to him who first wounded it, no matter by whom the *coup de grace* may have been inflicted.

Character as police constables : The Santals employed in the police force are very highly spoken of by an officer who long commanded them. They may not be expert detectives in tortuous cases, but in following up dacoits and attacking them when caught, they are far superior to the ordinary Bengali constables, and many instances of their activity and pluck have been related to me. Living as they generally do on the edges of forests, their constitutions are proof against malaria, and they may be employed on outpost duty in localities that are deadly to most people. They have been thus utilized on the grand trunk road in places where the jungle comes down to the road.

It often happens that the virtues of Santals employed in the police "are sanctified and holy traitors to them", their truthfulness and honesty cause them to be mistrusted by the more corrupt members of the force, and if their officer is not careful in protecting them they are often worried into resigning it ; besides, their peccadilloes are watched and reported by men who are hostile to them, and this often bars their promotion or leads to their dismissal. It is said that they are losing their character for truthfulness ; I have not myself found this. The Santals in Singbhum, who live much to themselves, are a very simple-minded people, almost incapable of deception.

Costume : The Santals dress better than most of their cognates. This also, it appears, is derived from the instruction of their first parents, who appointed the size of the garments that were to be worn respectively by male and female, but omitted to teach their offspring how they were to be made. They have no weavers among their own people. According to the tradition, the progenitors of the race gave their children an ornamental rather than a useful education; they taught them to sing and dance and play on the flute and drum, but failed to instruct them in any useful art.

The women wear ample *saris*, a large thick cloth not less than six yards in length with a gay red border. One-half of this forms the lower garment secured at the waist, but not so as to impede the free action of the limbs; the other half is passed over the left shoulder, leaving the right shoulder, arm, and part of the breast free, and allowed to hang down in front. It is not, as with Hindu maidens, used also as a veil. The heads of young girls are generally uncovered, displaying a mass of black, rather coarse, but sometimes wavy hair, gathered into a large knob at one side of the back of the head, ornamented with flowers or with tufts of colored silk.

'Their arms, ankles, and throats[52] are each laden with heavy brass or bell-metal ornaments. I had a quantity of these ornaments weighed and found that the bracelets fluctuated from two to four pounds,' and the entire weight sustained by one of these belles was found to be no less than thirty-four pounds of brass or bell-metal. The average may be estimated at about twelve pounds.

The Santal women are represented by all who have written about them as exceedingly chaste, yet the young people of the different sexes are greatly devoted to each other's society and pass much time together. No one has observed of them that they have customs of an immoral tendency such as obtain among the Mundas and Oraons; but I do not suppose there is in this respect much difference between the three tribes. In all [218] these the results of the nocturnal dances and freedom of intercourse must be pretty much the same, and Jag-manjhis have admitted to me that they have plenty of such love affairs to arrange.

Funeral ceremonies: In funeral ceremonies the Santal varies from the practice of the Ho and Munda tribes. The body is borne away on a *charpai* (cot) by kinsmen, and when it reaches a cross-road, some parched rice and cotton seed are scattered about as a charm against the malignant spirits that might throw obstacles in the way of the ceremony; it is then taken to a funeral pile near some reservoir or stream and placed on it. The son or brother is the first to apply fire to the body by placing a piece of burning wood on the face of the corpse, and soon all that is left are ashes and a few charred fragments of bones of the skull which are carefully preserved. Towards evening, it is customary for a man to take his seat near the ashes with a winnowing fan, in which he tosses rice till a phrensy appears to seize him, and he becomes inspired and says wonderful things. After the incremation, the immediate relatives of the deceased have to undergo a quarantine, as impure, for five days. On the sixth, they shave themselves and bathe, and after the sacrifice of a cock repair for consolation to the nearest liquor shop.

In due course the bones that have been saved are taken by the nearest of kin to the Damudar. He enters the stream bearing the sacred relics on his head in a basket, and selecting a place where the current is strong, he dips and commits the contents of his basket to the water, to be borne away to the great ocean as the resting place of the race.

All inquirers on the subject appear to have arrived at the conclusion that the Santals have no belief in a future state. The pilgrimage to the Damudar with the remains is simply an act of reverence and affection unconnected with any idea that there is a place where those who have left this world may again meet.

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[52] From Colonel Walter Sherwill's Notes.

It is to be observed that when the Santals in disposing of their dead differ from the Mundas, the former approximate to the Brahmanical customs. It is in fact a rough outline of the Brahman ritual, and only wants filling in. The halting at cross-roads and the scattering of rice, the application of fire first to the head by a relation, the collecting of the charred bones, especially those of the head, are all included in the ceremonies enjoined on Brahmans and orthodox Hindus.

The Brahman, like the Santal, carefully preserves the bones in an earthen vessel ; he is ordered to bury them in a safe place till a convenient season arrives for his journey to the sacred river—in his case the Ganges—where he consigns the vessel with its contents to the water.

SECTION 7

THE BIRHORS

Birhors and Madhu Singh : The reference to Madhu Singh and the Birhors in the foregoing pages caused me to make further inquiry regarding that tribe in the Hazaribagh district and I have been favored by Babu Kalidas Palit, Assistant Commissioner, now in charge of the Ramgarh Estate, with some particulars about them, which I subjoin.

I have already noticed the Birhors in the paper on the Kharrias, supposing them to be a kindred tribe. Among themselves they speak the Kol language, but can also converse freely in such Hindi as is spoken in this province.

[219] The Babu visited some of their settlements ; he found that the tradition about Madhu Singh was evidently known to them, but they were disinclined to give any information about him. An old Birhor of 85 years was communicative on other subjects, and commenced on that of Madhu Singh, but the moment he mentioned the name, his wife shut him up, and the old man would say no more.

Houses : The Birhors were found living in the jungles on the sides of hills in huts constructed only of branches of trees and leaves, but so made as to be quite watertight ; their huts are as small as those of the Juangs, previously described. The entrance door faces the east, and is about two feet from the ground. A man and his wife and young children sleep together in this small hut six feet square, but grown up children are provided with separate huts ; they lie on date tree leaf mats spread on the ground. They have hardly any cultivation, and never touch a plough. A man with his family who not long ago left their community and took to cultivating in the plains, are now considered outcasts. The men spend their time in snaring hares and monkeys, collecting edible roots and jungle fruits and the *chob* (*Bauhinia scandens*) bark, of which they make strings for various purposes. They are seldom seen in the villages, but the women frequent the markets to sell their ropes and Jungle produce.

Legends : The Birhors affirm that they and the Kharwars are of the same race descended from the sun. They came, seven brothers, to this country from Khairagarh (in the Kaimur hills) ; four went to the east, and three brothers remained in the Ramgarh district. One day when the three brothers were going out to fight against the chiefs of the country, the head dress of one of them got entangled in a tree. He deemed it a bad omen, and remained behind in the jungle. His two brothers went without him and gained a victory over the chiefs, and returning found their brother employed in cutting the bark of the *chob*. They derided him, calling him the Birhor,[53] or *chob* cutter ; he replied that he would rather remain a Birhor and reign in the jungles than associate with such haughty brothers. Thus originated the Birhors, lords of the jungles. The other two brothers became Rajas of the country called Ramgarh.

Numerical strength : The number of the Birhors is limited, estimated at not more than 700 for the whole Hazaribagh district. They are quite a nomadic race, wandering about from jungle to jungle, as the sources of their subsistence become exhausted. There are about ten families in the jungles near the village of Ramgarh, forty in the vicinity of Gola, ten in the jungles of Jagesar, and forty families about Chatra and Datar. Major Thompson, in his report on Palamau, speaks of them as the aborigines of that district. They are found in Chutia Nagpur proper, in Jashpur, and in Manbhum.

The women dress decently ; they have marks of tattooing on their chest, arms, and ankles ; they have no such marks on the face.

Women : After childbirth a woman remains in her hut for six days, and has no food, except medicinal herbs. Then the infant is taken out, not by the ordinary door, but by an opening made in the opposite wall ; this, it is believed, protects it from being devoured by a tiger or bitten by a snake.

[220] Marriages : Parents arrange the marriage of their children. The father of the bridegroom pays three rupees to the father of the bride. They have no priests, and the only ceremony is drawing blood from the little fingers of the bridegroom and bride, and with this the *tilak* is given to each by marks made above the clavicle. This, as I have elsewhere noted, I believe to be the origin of the practice now so universal of marking with red-lead. The convivialities of feasting and dancing conclude the day.

The ceremony takes place in the bride's house, and next morning she is taken to her husband's ; but after remaining there two days she returns to her father's to complete her education and growth at home.

Disposal of the dead : Their ceremonial in regard to the dead is quite Hindu. They burn the body and convey the remainder of the bones afterwards to the Ganges, they say ; but probably any stream answers. They do not shave for ten days as a sign of mourning ; at the end of that time all shave and they have a feast.

Deities : The Birhors worship female deities and devils. They have assigned to Devi the chief place among the former and the others are supposed to be her daughters and granddaughters ; she is worshipped as the creator and destroyer. The devils are Biru Bhut, who is worshipped in the form of a raised semi-globe of earth—Biru is also the Kharria god—and Darha, represented by a piece of split bamboo three feet high, placed in the ground in an inclined position, called also the *sipahi*, sentinel. This is the immediate guardian of the site, as a god or devil of a similar name is with the Mundas and Oraons. A small round piece of wood, nearly a foot in length, the top painted red, is called 'Banhi', goddess of the jungles. Another similar is Lugu, the protectress of the earth. Lugu is the largest hill in Ramgarh, so this is their Marang Buru.

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[53] Birhor is Munda for a woodman or forester,

An oblong piece of wood, painted red, stands for 'Maha Maya', Devi's daughter. A small piece of white stone daubed with red for her grand-daughter, Buria Mai ; an arrow head stands for Dudha Mai, Buria's daughter. They have also a trident painted red for Hanuman, who executes all Devi's orders.

Sets of these symbols are placed one on the east and one on the west of their huts, to protect them from evil spirits, snakes, tigers, and all kinds of misfortune.

It is not easy to place the Birhors from what is above disclosed, but the fact that, though a wandering and exclusive people, they commune in the Munda language, is, I think, sufficient to establish that they belong to the Kol race ; and then they have the Mundari-Oraon deity Darha and adore the Biru of the Kharrias.

The people with whom they exchange commodities are all Hindus or Hinduised, so it is not surprising that they should take up Hindu notions.

Alleged cannibalism : In notes of a tour in the Tributary Mahals, published in the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, I described the revolting cannibalism of which the Birhors are accused, and I will repeat it here, though I have no faith in the story. "With much trouble some Birhors were caught and brought to me. They were wretched-looking objects, but had more the appearance of the most abject of one of those degraded castes of Hindus, the Domes or Pariahs, to whom most flesh is food, than of hill people. Assuring me that they had themselves given up the practice, they admitted that their fathers were in the habit of disposing of the dead in the manner [221] indicated, *viz.*, by feasting on the bodies ; but they declared they never shortened life to provide such feasts, and shrank with horror at the idea of any bodies but those of their own blood relations being served up to them ! The Raja of Jashpur said, he had heard that when a Birhor thought his end was approaching, he himself invited his kindred to come and eat him. The Birhors brought to me did not acknowledge this."

We are reminded of Herodotus' description[54] of the Padoei, who killed and feasted on all who fell sick, and of the Kalatii, who ate their parents.

SECTION 8

THE KORWAS

The country jointly occupied by the Mundas proper and the Oraons extends in a westerly direction to longitude 84° 3′ east, and on reaching that meridian at about latitude 23° 15′

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[54] Quotedn in Latham's *Desc. Ethnology*, Vol. II, p. 304.

north, we find ourselves in the centre of a dependency of Chutia Nagpur, called Barwah, connected and bounded by the plateau of Chutia Nagpur, Sirguja, and Jashpur, a combination of hill and dale, well-cultivated plains and forest-clad mountains, just suited to the mixed population that dwell in it.

The Asuras : The tract is rich in iron ore, and in the hills we find a branch of the family living almost entirely by iron smelting, who, strange to say, like the fallen angels of the tradition given at page [186] are commonly designated Asuras, infidels, and have taken quite kindly to the name. It must, however, have been originally given to them as a term of reproach, and we may observe that it is an epithet frequently applied to the Nag or serpent race in the sacred writings.

The Asuras of Barwah do not, however, acknowledge the tradition of the rise of the Nagbangsi family, nor honor the memory of Madura. Sing Bonga they just recognise, and the worship of the supreme deity by that name does not appear to have extended beyond this point ; they know nothing of Marang Buru as a god, but they worship the great hills near them by other names. Nevertheless, from their name, their vocation and position, we must infer their connection with the vulcans kicked out of heaven by Sing Bonga, for I find in Barwah the very place Ekasi where they alighted on earth. They are also called Agorias.

The Korwas : Mixed up with the Asuras and not greatly differing from them, except that they are more cultivators of the soil than smelters, we first meet the Korwas, a few stragglers of the tribe which under that name take up the dropped links of the Kolarian chain, and carry it on west, over the Sirguja, Jashpur, and Palamau highlands till it reaches another cognate tribe, the Kurs or Muasis of Rewa and the Central Provinces, and passes from the Vindhyan to the Satpura range.

In the fertile valleys that skirt and wind among the plateaux, other tribes are now found intermixed with the Korwas, but all admit that the latter were first in the field and were at one time masters of the whole ; and we have good confirmatory proof of their being the first settlers, in the fact that for the propitiation of the local spirits Korwa baigas are always selected.

Whether the Korwas always cling to the highlands from choice or were forcibly expelled from the more productive low-lands, it is difficult to determine. As lords of the whole, they could no doubt have chosen the soil and situation that best suited [222] them ; but I am inclined to think that the genuine unreclaimed Korwas, glorying rather in the wild life of the hunter than in the tame pursuits of the agriculturist, have from the remotest antiquity lived by choice as highlanders, thoroughly despising the lowlanders, who indeed appear to have been too much in dread of them ever to have disturbed them.

The savage and almost nomadic life that they lead is not favorable to increase of population, and I do not think the tribe now numbers more than fourteen thousand souls ; but they assert themselves, and their neighbours support the statement, that they were at one time more numerous and powerful, and it is possible that many of the broken tribes now found scattered throughout this part of India once formed with the Korwas a people united under some rude form of government.

We find in Sirguja as in other nooks and corners of Hindustan temples and other ruins exhibiting considerable architectural skill, lying forlorn and deserted amidst a population who live themselves in huts of the rudest construction which they are incapable of improving. Each little state has its history which carries you back to some mythic period, but no history or even tradition that touches the ruins. Some are Buddhist, some Hindu, but beyond the symbols that determine to which of those religions they appertained, there is nothing to indicate when or by whom they were constructed.

Ruins at Dipadhi : A group of such ruins may be seen on the main road from Ranchi through Sirguja in a valley on the banks of the Kanhar river at a place called Dipadhi. To the north is the Jamira, to the south the Khuria, plateau, both occupied by hill Korwas, and the villages in the valley are all inhabited by people of the aboriginal stock, Kolarian and Dravidian, with a sprinkling of Hindus of the lowest caste, the descendants probably of Aryan helots.

The lowlanders have a tradition that these ruins belong to a period when the dominant people in the country were Saonts, and they connect the Korwas with the Saonts. On one side of the road are the remains of a fort and stone building where the Saont Raja lived ; on the other side may be traced the remains of three temples dedicated to Shiva and Durga, and amongst the sculptures is a colossal figure, too much mutilated to be properly identified, supposed to be the Saont Raja himself.

No one could imagine that the wild Korwas ever possessed the skill to construct such buildings, or that they are descended from a people who worshipped in them. In their rough paganism there is not now a trace of Hindu teaching, and though highly superstitious and impressionable, they have not the smallest reverence for the mysterious-looking gods of the unknown architects of the temples. But these and other similarly isolated ruins in Sirguja and Barwah support the hypothesis that at a remote period prior to its subjugation by Gonds, this country contained colonies of Aryans, whose first attempts were to proselytize rather than subjugate, but who were not successful, as their very name is lost, and the works of art they left behind are attributed to the savages who withstood them. It is probably under similar circumstances that ruins in Bihar, Tirhut, and other places are attributed to the 'Chero-Kol-Raj.'

The name Saont or Saonta directs us to the Santal branch of the Kols, and as I have already noticed, there is in Sirguja a small tribe so called. I had not seen much of them when I penned the brief account that is given of them in the chapters devoted to Hinduized aborigines, but I have since met many of the tribe. They are the sole inhabitants of [223] the magnificent tableland forming the southern barrier of Sirguja, called the Mainpat, or more correctly perhaps the Manipat. They are a small tribe living scattered over the vast area of the plateau in about a dozen hamlets, and they are strong in the belief that they were especially created to dwell there, or that they and the plateau somehow sprung into existence together, and cannot be separated. I saw a number of them when I was last[55] in Sirguja, and from their features I should be inclined to class them as Kols, but they have some customs and notions which they must have derived from the Dravidian Gonds. They acknowledge Dulhadeo as a household god, and follow the customs of the Gonds and other southerners in their marriage ceremonies ; but there is one point, a very striking one, in which their funeral rites are quite in accord with those of the Saonts. They told me without my having in the least led them to the point that after burning their dead they throw the ashes into a rapid stream with the view to their being borne away to the great ocean, which they called 'Samudra.' The Santals also use a term of Sanskrit derivation, but they say 'Sagar'. It is singular that the Saonts, believing themselves to be autochthonous on the Mainpat, which is 250 miles from the nearest seaboard, and isolated as they are, should have so fully realized the idea that the discharge of rivers is into a great ocean, and still more so that they should have preserved the custom of consigning their dead to it, —a custom which in speaking of the Santals, Dr. Hunter poetically styles "the reunion of the dead with the fathers."

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[55] 1869-70

Deities : They worship the sun as Bhagawan, and like the Kharrias offer sacrifices to that luminary in an open place with an ant-hill for an altar. The Mainpat is their Marang Buru, and as it is 16 miles long, 12 miles broad, and rises 3,850 feet above the sea level, it is not unworthy of the name ; but they do not use that or any other Kol term.. The great Mainpat is their fatherland and their god. They have it all to themselves except during the summer months, when it becomes a vast grazing field for the cattle of Mirzapur and Bihar. They have heard that there are Saonts elsewhere (I have met with some from the eastern borders of Sohagpur who told me they lived in caves), but they are not Mainpat Saonts, and the Mainpatias do not seek alliances with aliens. Their marriages are among themselves, though they number not more than one hundred and twenty families. This interbreeding is not prolific, and they diminish in numbers as years roll on.

The Saonts are armed like the Korwas with bows and arrows, and the peculiar battle-axe of the country, but it is against the beasts of the forest that these weapons are used. Formerly the Mainpat was a magnificent hunting field, especially noted for its herds of antelope and gaur. The late Maharaja of Sirguja strictly preserved it, but on his death it fell into the hands of his widow, a very money-loving old lady, who allowed it to become one of the great grazing tracts, and the pasturage alone gives her an income of £250 a year ; but the wild animals have in consequence withdrawn from it.

The position of the Saonts is altogether very curious, and though they now speak no language but a rude Hindi, the evidence is, on the whole, favorable to their being a remnant of the ancient Kol aborigines of Sirguja, cut off from connection with those people by successive inroads of other races or tribes. Their substitution of a Hindi **[224]** dialect for their own language seems to indicate that they were first subjugated by Aryans. The Gond chiefs only count about twenty-four generations in Sirguja, and they have all adopted the Hindi language.

Korwa Chiefs : There were in existence within the last twenty years as highland chiefs and holders of manors four Korwa notables, two in Sirguja and two in Jashpur ; all four estates were valuable, as they comprised substantial villages in the fertile plains held by industrious cultivators, and great tracts of hill country on which were scattered the hamlets of their more savage followers. The Sirguja Korwa chiefs were, however, continually at strife with the Sirguja Raja, and for various acts of rebellion against the Lord Paramount, lost manor after manor, till to each but one or two villages remained, This was their position when the mutiny of 1857 broke out, and like many others they thought that the disturbances and anarchy that supervened afforded them an opportunity of recovering what they had lost. Placing themselves at the head of their clansmen, they committed a series of raids on the lowland villages. Wholesale plundering and murdering were resorted to for a time, but ere long the insurrection was cut short by the capture of the two chiefs; one[56] of them who was convicted of murder was hanged, the other[57] was amnestied, but died.

The two Jashpur thanes conducted themselves right loyally at this crucial period, and they are now prosperous gentlemen in the full enjoyment of their estates, the only Korwa families left that keep up any appearance of respectability. One[58] of them is the hereditary Diwan of Jashpur, lord of the whole mountain tract of Khuria and Maini, and chief of perhaps two-thirds of the whole tribe of Korwas. The other holds an estate called Kakia, comprising twenty-two villages in the lowlands and some hill country. Both these families abjure the impure practices of their tribe, and, spurning alliances with the ordinary Korwas, have continued interbreeding for several generations. They hope in time that their intimate connection with the Korwas will be forgotten, and in the next century they will probably come forth full-fledged Rajputs. Indeed, I was surprised to find that the Brahmanical heralds college had not yet given either of them a legend of miraculous birth or independent lineage. But though affecting Hinduism, they dare not altogether disown the spirits of the hills and forests that their ancestors adored, and they have each at their head-quarters a Korwa Baiga, or pagan priest, to propitiate the gods of the race. I could not find a member of either family, male or female, who would condescend to speak one word of Korwa. In this, however, they are not singular, as I observed that even the poorer Korwas when once settled in the plains, were unwilling to converse in their own tongue. The Laird of Kakia has recently assumed the imposing name of Manjhi Mahendra Narain Sahi; but notwithstanding this ebullition of vanity, he is an intelligent man, a kind landlord, an excellent farmer, and as portly and jovial a host as a traveller could wish to meet. His farm, premises, and dwelling house are spacious, well arranged, and kept scrupulously clean. The family residence contains under one roof numerous apartments and occupies one whole side of a large quadrangle; two comfortable houses forming the north side afford accommodation to other married members of the family; opposite are the cow-sheds, and filling up the front side of the quadrangle there is [225] a long substantial building for strangers, pilgrims and attendants, through which is the principal entrance. In the centre of the quadrangle there is a pavilion open on all sides, and here I was invited to seat myself, whilst the young ladies of the house brought vessels and water to wash my feet. I have been particular in giving this description in order to show that a Korwa, however unpromising the material, is susceptible of culture, and can become a useful member of society.

The Diwan is no doubt the representative of the family which gave chiefs to the Korwas when the tribe was dominant in this Jashpur hill tract. The aboriginal inhabitants were all either Korwas or Nagesars, who are commonly called 'Kisans', that is, cultivators. It is probable that Kisans and Korwas are of common origin; the former are noticed in my chapter on Hinduized aborigines, but their origin is uncertain; there is a Dravidian as well as Kolarian element in the Jashpur population, and it is doubtful to which they are nearest of kin, but, on the whole, the preponderance of evidence is in favor of their Kol extraction. They cannot speak the Kol language, but it is found that Korwas, deserting the hills and joining the Kisans in permanent rice cultivation in the valleys, lose their language and most of their tribal peculiarities, and become so like the Kisans that it is difficult to discriminate between the two.

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[56] Dhaim Singh. [57] Jagmohun Singh. [58] Mandraj Singh.

History : The present Raja of Jashpur fully admits that the Diwan's ancestors were the original rulers of the country. His own family counts only seventeen generations since assuming the sceptre, and were first established in the lowlands, where the remains of their ancient stronghold may still be seen. They were Kharwars, whom I suppose to have been an offshoot of the same race, and their tradition, that they were driven out of Belonja in Bihar, may refer to the break up of the Chero-Kol-Kharwar nation, formerly located in Kikata or Khinkat, afterward Magadha. The family having established themselves in the lowlands gradually brought the highlands under subjection, but the great highland chief only yielded on condition that he was to be acknowledged and maintained as the second person in the realm, the Lieutenant or Diwan. This was conceded, and from generation to generation there was no breach of the contract till the grandfather of the present Raja, disregarding the ancient policy of his family, confided the affairs of the raj to his foster brother, a Kahar named Anand Ram. The hereditary Korwa Diwan, Munawar Singh, resenting this, a small civil war ensued which lasted for many years, and was still in active operation when Jashpur with Sirguja and other territory was ceded to the British Government by Appa Sahib in A. D. 1818. Some of the Company's roops were sent to co-operate with the Raja against his refractory vassal, but they made very little impression on the Korwas, and Munawar Singh fought till he died in A. D. 1821.

His son Maniar Singh, who had been captured during the hostilities and detained in custody, was now released, and under the guarantee of the British Government reinstated in all the hereditary honors and possessions of the family, since when the Jashpur Korwas have always conducted themselves peaceably and loyally.

Hill Korwas : The Hill Korwas are the most savage-looking of all the Kolarian tribes. They are frightfully wild and uncouth in their appearance, and have good-humouredly accepted the following singular tradition to account for it. The story was communicated to Captain Samuells, Assistant Commissioner, by a Korwa of Sirguja, but the Jashpur section of the clan never heard of it.

[226] Their legends : The first human beings that settled in Sirguja being very much troubled by the depredations of wild beasts on their crops, put up scarecrows in their fields, figures made of bamboos dangling in the air, the most hideous caricatures of humanity that they could devise to frighten the animals.

When the great spirit saw the scarecrows, he hit on an expedient to save his votaries the trouble of reconstructing them. He animated the dangling figures, thus bringing into existence creatures ugly enough to frighten all the birds and beasts in creation, and they were the ancestors of the wild Korwas.

Stature, &c. : They are short of stature and dark brown in complexion, strongly built and active, with good muscular development, but, as appeared to me, disproportionately short-legged. The average height of twenty Sirguja Korwas whom I measured was five feet three inches, and of their women four feet nine only. In feature, the characteristic types are not very prominent ; a breadth of face from the lateral projection of the zygomatic arches and narrowness of forehead are the most remarkable traits ; the nose, chin, and mouth are better formed than we generally find them among the rude tribes of the Dravidian stock ; and notwithstanding the scarecrow tradition, the Korwas are, as a rule, better-looking than the Gonds and Oraons. The males, I noticed, were more hirsute than the generality of their cognates, many of them cultivating beards or rather not interfering with their spontaneous growth, for in truth in their toilettes there is nothing like cultivation. They are as utterly ungroomed as the wildest animals. The neglected back hair grows in matted tails which fall behind like badly frayed royes, or is massed in a 'chignon' of gigantic proportions, as preposterous as any that the present tasteless period has produced ; sticking out behind sometimes a foot from the back of the head.

Women : The women appear ground down by the hard work imposed on them, stunted in growth, black, ugly, and wretchedly clad, some having only a few dirty rags tied round their persons, and in other respects untidy and unclean.' On them falls the double task of labour in the fields and of providing the daily bread for the miserable household. They have all the burdens, but none of the privileges, of women. The man may follow his instincts as a hunting animal, and bow and arrow in hand search the hills for the meat that his soul loveth ; but he, day after day, returns unsuccessful, and in the meantime the woman has been hunting for and digging up wild esculent roots, or culling wild vegetables, hewing wood and drawing water, and woe betide her if she has not been more successful than her lord.

The most savage of the Korwas answer well the description given in the *Puranas* of the inhabitants of the Vindhyan mountains—black skins with flat faces, projecting chins, and tawny hair. The tuft by way of beard at the end of their chins, without whiskers, gives that feature its apparent prominence, and the rusty tint that their long matted hair acquires by their neglect of it, would appear tawny in comparison with the well lubricated locks of the Brahmans.

The Korwas of Khuria : The Korwas occupying the Khuria plateau are equally wild and savage-looking, and few of them can converse in any language but their own, but they are some degrees fairer, and have better features than the coal black savages of the Vindhyan.

[227] They live in small detached hamlets, consisting each of three or four miserable huts, or sometimes in single huts far apart. It is said by their neighbours, and admitted by themselves, that they live thus to avoid the bloody brawls which generally follow their attempts to form communities.

Sometimes they build their huts like eagles' eyries on the ledges of mountain precipices in the most inaccessible places. From below you may see such huts hanging as it were to a steep cliff, and wonder how the owners, if without wings, approach them.

The Korwa population of Khuria does not exceed 2,000 souls. They have that great table-land all to themselves, except when a few Ahirs with their cattle seek its fresh pastures after the first fall of the regular rains ; but from its remote situation, Khuria is not so frequented for grazing purposes as the table-lands of Sirguja, Palamau, and other places.

Cultivation : The Khuria plateau averages 3,400 feet above the sea level, and rises to 4,000 feet. It is the cradle of many waters ; affluents of the Son, the Damudar, and the Mahanadi radiate from it, so it is no unimportant watershed. Seamed by these streams, there is no want of variety in the scenery which alternately presents to view miniature prairies covered with long grass and swelling uplands forest-clad. The Korwa cultivation is chiefly in the latter. So the prairies are left to the wild beasts and the cattle. What is called in the Eastern Districts the *jhum* system of cultivation and in the common Chutia Nagpur dialect *daho*, is here widely resorted to. Ploughs are not used in this elevated region. In the cold weather the hoar frost is almost every morning thick on the ground, and on this account there is no winter crop of rice. Their principal crop is the *pulse*, called *Arhar* (*Cajanus Indicus*), and they have their harvest joy when it is gathered in December ; then for three or four days they are social and abandon themselves to savage revelry, dancing, feasting, drinking, and giving themselves up to unbridled debauchery. At other times, utterly indifferent to culinary art, they now make cakes of millet flour, split peas, and honey, and this is their special luxury, their plum-pudding for the festive season. Little else is known of the nature of their orgies, but dancing with them, as with all their cognates, is a passion, and if they perform when in a seasonable state of wild ebriety, armed to the teeth as I saw them dancing when sober, the incidents of the ball must be often more sensational than amusing. In civilized society, young men lose their hearts in this pleasant and exciting amusement, but Korwa gallants have been known in the most literal sense to lose their heads.

Dances : One morning, when encamped in a valley of Khuria, my slumbers were broken at a very early hour by a chorus of Oraon youths and maidens who were dancing and singing not 100 yards from the tent, their song strangely mingling with or suggesting my dreams. I must have been long listening before I could collect my thoughts sufficiently to comprehend the object and cause of the loud, but not unmelodious, morning carol. On my emerging at length to acknowledge the compliment, upwards of one hundred naked savage-looking Korwas, all armed, sprang up from the grass, as if they had been lying there in ambush, and were on slaughter bent, but instead of attacking me and chopping me up with battle-axes, they too burst forth into rude song, utterly extinguishing the gentler strains of [228] the Oraons, and forming a huge circle or rather coil they hooked on to each other by the arms and wildly danced. In their hands they sternly grasped their weapons, the long stiff bow and arrows with bright broad barbed heads and spirally feathered reed shafts in the left hand, and the gleaming battle-axe in the right, some of the men accompanies the singing on deep-toned drums and all sang, but I was surprised to find that the songs were in a Hindi dialect like the songs of the Boyars, and the melody was the same. A few scantily clad females formed the inner curl of the coil, but in the centre was the Choroegus, who played on a stringed instrument, promoting by his grotesque motions unbounded hilarity, and keeping up the spirit of the dancers by his unflagging energy.

The instrument was of curious construction. The bar subtending the wires was connected with two hollow dried gourds acting as sounding boards ; on one of them was a very fair miniature representation of a tiger, and as the performer moved his hand to strike the lute, he worked a string which caused this latter animal to bob up and down and twist round and dance in time to the music like a veritable Jim Crow. This was the most elaborate specimen of Korwa art that I had seen.

Stature, &c : The average height of the men who formed this dancing group was five feet four inches, the tallest five feet eight ; their sole garment was a rag passing between the legs and attached before and behind to a string round the waist. Their matted back hair was either massed into a chignon, sticking out from the back of the head like a handle from which spare arrows depended hanging by the barbs, or was divided into clusters of long matted tails, each supporting a spare arrow, which, flinging about as they sprang to the lively movements of the dance, added greatly to the dramatic effect and the wildness of their appearance. The women were very diminutive creatures, on the average a foot shorter than their lords, clothed in scanty rags, and with no ornaments except a few tufts of cotton, dyed red, taking the place of flowers in the hair, a common practice also with the Santal girls. Both tribes are fond of the flower of the coxcomb for this purpose, and when that is not procurable, use the red cotton.

The dancing was, on the whole, very spirited, and resembled pretty closely a Munda Jadura.

Weapons : The Korwas are considered formidable as bowmen, but I was not struck with the accuracy of their aim. I think that an average corps of our fair archers would make more golds, but they pull an enormously stiff bow and drive their arrows with a force that I have never seen equalled by amateurs. The barbed arrow heads are nine inches long and one and a half in breadth. These they make themselves of the iron they smelt in their own hills ; they use the battle-axe very adroitly.

Food : The Korwas cultivate newly cleared ground, changing their homesteads every two or three years to have command of a virgin soil. They sow rice that ripens in the summer, vetches, millets, pumpkins, cucumbers, some of gigantic size, sweet potatoes, yams, and chillis. They also grow and prepare arrowroot, and have a wild kind which they use and sell. They have as keen a knowledge of what is edible amongst the spontaneous produce of the jungles as have monkeys, and have often to use this knowledge for self-preservation, as they are frequently subjected **[229]** to failure of crops, while even in favorable seasons some of them do not raise sufficient for the year's consumption, but the best of this description of food is neither palatable nor wholesome. They brought to me nine different kinds of edible roots, and descanted so earnestly on the delicate flavor and nutritive qualities of some of them that I was induced to have two or three varieties cooked under their instructions and served up, but the result was far from pleasant ; my civilized stomach indignantly repelled the savage food, and was not pacified till it had made me suffer for some hours from cold sweat, sickness, and giddiness.

Storing Grain : They pack their grain in small parcels done up lightly in leaves. These they bury, and they told me that grain so packed remained unimpaired for years. They have no prejudices whatever in regard to animal food.

Trade : The Korwas trade in honey, beeswax, arrowroot, resins, gums, stick lac, and iron from their own hills and of their own smelting. This is considered the best metal for battle-axes, and is in great request wherever they are used.

Religion : The Korwas are unacquainted with the legends of their Munda cognates. Those in Sirguja told me that they knew nothing whatever of Bongas, and worshipped no gods. They sacrifice only to the manes of their ancestors, and as this ceremony must necessarily be performed by the head of each family, they have no priests. In Jashpur they have Baigas, and the Khuria Korwas have at least one shrine to which all occasionally resort for worship, the shrine of the Khuria Rani. I was unable to visit it, but made minute enquiries, and I understand it to be a small cave in a rock which rises abruptly from a stream, with a nook in front of it, about half-way up the Khuria plateau. It is supposed to be the abode of a sanguinary deity, of course a female, more like the blood-thirsty goddess of the Gonds, the prototype of the Hindu Kali, than any of the Kol objects of worship. All the Korwas adore her, but she is more especially the tutelary deity of the Diwan. This family have to make a great sacrifice to her every third generation. The last was made by the father of the present Diwan, and the Korwa laird of Kakia who was present gave me a humorous account of it.

Thirty to forty baffaloes were with difficulty driven to the place and immolated together with an incalculable number of goats, but the ceremony was brought to an abrupt close by a mysterious rumbling noise in the cave and a tremulous motion of the rock, probably an earthquake, which caused the whole party to fly at the imminent risk of their lives. One can well imagine the terror of the awe-stricken votaries, worked into a high pitch of excitement by the bloody rites,—wading in the gore of the victims—as brute after brute was decapitated. The goddess is a mystery even to her priests, for into the cave no mortal has ever penetrated. No doubt when the rumbling was heard, and the rocks shook, a dreadful appearance was expected, but notwithstanding the cost incurred in invoking her, no one was bold enough to await the result.

Marriages : I could obtain no information regarding Korwa marriages. The Dihi Korwas adopt the Gondi ceremonies; their hill brethren have, I believe, none at all, nor could I find that they had, like their cognates, any tribal distinctions by which restrictions on intermarriages were imposed.

[230] Marauding habits : The Korwas on the highlands of Sirguja are occasionally exceedingly lawless. They were at one time organized in bands of marauders and appeared to subsist altogether by pillage, which was not seldom accompanied by murder, but for some years they have been well conducted, the leaders having for the most part been induced to take up lands in the plains.

Cruelty. Truthfulness : They have shown great cruelty in committing robberies, putting to death the whole of the party attacked, even when unresisting, but they have what one might call the savage virtue of truthfulness to an extra-ordinary degree, and, rightly accused, will at once confess and give you every required detail of the crime. When several are implicated in one offence, I have found them most anxious that to each should be ascribed his fair share of it, and no more, the oldest of the party invariably taking on himself the chief responsibility as leader or instigator, and doing his utmost to exculpate as unaccountable agents the young members of the gang.

SECTION 9—THE KURS, KURKUS, OR MUASIS.

Very few Korwas are met with beyond the western confines of Sirguja ; but when on passing into the next state, Korea, we lose them,we at once pick up links to carry on the chain of congeners to the far West.

The family now in possession of the Korea Estate call themselves Chauhan Rajputs. In their annals it is stated that the Balands were originally rulers in Korea as in Western Sirguja, where there exist the ruins of many great works traditionally ascribed to them. They were driven out by a combined attack of Gonds and Kols. The latter are called Kronch Kols, and their chiefs, it is said, held Korea for eleven generations. They were subjugated by the Chauhan Chief Dhaurel Singh, the ancestor of the present Raja of Korea, about 600 years ago. If this be true, Korea must have been one of the last countries held by a Kol dynasty, and this may account for its retention of the name Korea, or Kolia, as the country of the Korwas or Kols.

Whilst still in Sirguja amongst the Korwas, I fell in with a colony of people speaking the same language who called themselves Koraku, but they appeared to be far in advance of the Korwas in civilization, and acknowledged no kindred with them. About a dozen young men and six comely and neatly dressed girls came to my camp, and danced and sang, and made themselves very agreeable.

The movement and melody were Bhuiya rather than Kol, but the flower-decked hair of the maidens was uncovered and in their frank address, freedom from prudery, and in the palpably joyous manner with which they received and returned the attention of their partners, they reminded me of the Ho or Singbhum Kol girls.

The Korakus knew nothing of the Munda system of religion ; they have dipped into Gondi and Hindi mythology, and evolved from both sufficient to fill their minds with fear of malevolent spirits, if not with reverence for good ones. They worship the cloud-capped table-lands which surround them, giving to them Gondi and Hindi names.

Koraku and Korwa : The Palamau Brijias evidently belong to the same family. In a short vocabulary of their language kindly sent to me by Mr. L. R. Forbes, Assistant Commissioner, Palamau, **[231]** I find that their common word for man is 'Kurako,' which is simply the plural of Kur or Kura (in Munda a boy), and we have thus a term equally near the Koraku and Korwa of Sirguja, and the Kur[59] of Gawilgarh. In the appendix to the essay on the tribes of the Central Provinces by the late Rev. S. Hislop, published since his death by Sir Richard Temple, the latter tribe is spoken of as Kurkus, in another place they are called Kurs, but it is noted that those who live on the Mahadeva Hills prefer to be called Muasi. Now, leaving Sirguja and passing into Korea and Chand Bhakhar, we at once find ourselves among the Muasis who are there usually called Mawasi Kols, and thus we trace a well-defined thin line of the race all through Gondwana and right across the continent till we come among the Bhils. There is a *pargana* in Rewa called Marwasi, from which, perhaps, the name is derived, but Mr. Hislop suggests its derivation from the *Mahwa* tree (*bassia latifolia*), and this their own legend confirms.

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[59] In the *Central Provinces Gazetteer*, Kurs are noticed as occupying hill tracts in Betul (Baitool), in Chhindwara, in Hoshangabad, in Nimar, and as the only inhabitants of Manjrod on the Tapti.

Naga legends : Captain W. S. Samuells, Assistant Commissioner, Chutia Nagpur, has favored me with some interesting information regarding the Muasi, picked up by him whilst recently employed in laying down the boundary between Rewa and Bengal. Their tradition of origin takes us again to the serpent race. Some time after the creation of the world, there issued from the earth a male and female, Naga Bhuiya and Naga Bhuiain, that is, evidently the earth serpent and his wife. They had power over and worshipped nine demons whose names as pronounced by the Muasis are given below. They are apparently all taken from the Hindu mythology. The 1st, called Barhona, is no doubt Varuna, the spirit of the waters ; the 2nd, Andhiar, the spirit of darkness ; the 3rd, Rakas (Rakshasas), the demons of the forest ; the 4th, Chitawur, which I do not recognise ; the 5th, Pat, the spirit of the mountain ; 6th, Danu, are Danawas, the sons of Danu, described in the *Puranas* as Asuras, enemies of the gods and subordinates of the great serpent king Kasuki ; 7th, Bhainsasur, the buffalo demon ; 8th, Agin, probably for Agni, the fire demon, and 9th, Kolara, not found in the sacred books, perhaps a special Kol demon. The Naga and his wife, after living many years on the earth's surface, had a son which was apparently what they had been waiting for,as on the birth of the child they wrapped it in a sheet, left it under a Mahwa tree and disappeared. The child was found and taken to the Raja of Kanauj, who gave it the name Mahwasi and adopted it. The boy grew up and marrying became the father of two sons, and the Raja gave them the country called Ganjar. This they held for many years, paying tribute to the Kanauj ruler, but they increased and multiplied and grew proud, and refusing to pay the accustomed tribute, the Raja gave their country to two warriors from Kalinjar, named Apla and Adal. They made war on the Muasis, subjugated them, and brought the leaders bound before the king, who caused a loaded banghy to be laid across the shoulders of each, and pronounced sentence that they and their descendants were thenceforth for ever to bear burdens.

Religion : It is evident that this is another version of the legend previously narrated from the annals of the Chutia Nagpur Nagbangsi family[60]. In both we find the snake father, the deserted child and the doom [232] to burden-bearing, showing the alien origin of the tradition and the devices adopted by the foreigners to reduce the aboriginal races to a perpetual condition of servitude. We learn from the essay of the Rev. S. Hislop that the chief objects of adoration to the Muasis of the Central Provinces are the sun and the moon. They also worship at the shrine of Sultan Sakada, whom they suppose to have been a king among them in former times. The Muasis of Barar and in the western tributary estates of Chutia Nagpur worship Bhavani, a name of Durga, and Gansam or Ghanasyama. The latter is a name of Krishna, but the Gansam of the Muasis and Gonds is said to have been formerly a Gond chief who was devoured by a tiger at an early age just after his marriage. Cut off at such a moment, it was unreasonable to suppose that his spirit would rest. One year after his death, he visited his wife, and she conceived by him, and the descendants of the ghostly embrace are, it is said, living to this day at Amodah[61] in the Central Provinces. He about the same time appeared to many of his old friends, and persuaded them that he could save them from the maws of tigers and other calamities, if his worship were duly inaugurated and regularly performed, and in consequence of this, two festivals in the year were established in his honor ; but he may be invoked at any time, and in all sicknesses and misfortunes his votaries confidently appeal to him.

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[60] *Vide* page [165.]

[61] I do not find this name in the *Central Provinces Gazetteer.* It may be Almod "in and round the Mahadeo group of hills."

Priests. Invocations : The Baiga is always the medium of communication, but he assembles the people to aid him in the invocation. Musical instruments are produced, dancing commences, and the invocation to the spirit is chanted until one or more of the performers manifest possession by wild rolling of the eyes and involuntary spasmodic action of the muscles. The affection appears contagious, and old women and others who have not been dancing become influenced by it in a manner that is horrible to contemplate. Captain Samuells, who frequently witnessed the incantation, is confident that no deception whatever is practised. As at revivals where similar scenes are produced by professing Christians, each person seized or exalted loses for a time all self-control, and the body, limbs, and neck are worked in the most exhaustive manner, till the Baiga interposes and relieves the victim.

The affection, says Captain Samuells, comes on like a fit of ague, lasting sometimes for a quarter of an hour, the patient or possessed persons writhing and trembling with intense violence, especially at the commencement of the paroxysm. Then he is seen to spring from the ground into the air, and a succession of leaps follow, all executed as though he were shot at by unseen agency. During this stage of the seizure he is suppossed to be quite unconscious, and rolls into the fire, if there be one, or under the feet of the dancers without sustaining injury from the heat or the pressure. This lasts for a few minutes only, and is followed by the spasmodic stage. With hands and knees on the ground and hair loosened, the body is convulsed, and the head shakes violently, whilst from the mouth issues a hissing or gurgling noise. The patient next evincing an inclination to stand on his legs, the bystanders assist him and place a stick in his hand, with the aid of which he hops about, the spasmodic action of the body still continuing and the head performing by jerks a violently fatiguing circular movement. This may go on for hours, though Captain Samuells says that no one in his senses could continue such exertion for many minutes. When the Baiga is appealed to, to cast out the spirit, he must first ascertain whether it is Gansam himself or one of his familiars [233] that has possessed the victim. If it be the great Gansam, the Baiga implores him to desist, meanwhile gently anointing the victim with butter ; and if the treatment is successful, the patient gradually and naturally subsides into a state of repose from which he rises into consciousness, and restored to his normal state, feels no fatigue or other ill-effects from the attack.

This is certainly the most thorough form of demon worship with which we have met, and one that must appear to its votaries to testify to its own reality each time it is resorted to.

Hinduized practices : In many of their social customs, the Muasis of the Western Tributary Mahals and Rewa conform to Hinduism ; in some they have adopted Gondi practices. Amongst other notions which they have taken from the Hindu model, is that of the wife not eating with the husband, but satisfying herself with what he leaves ; it is singular how readily this Hindu fashion so degrading to the woman is followed. Some of the Hindu customs after childbirth, as ceremoniously giving first food to the child, shaving its head, &c., they profess to have adopted, but without the assistance of Brahmans, who have not yet intruded on the functions of the Baiga.

Marriage customs : With the view of ascertaining correctly what are the marriage customs of the Muasi, Captain Samuells handsomely offered to dower a young lady, if a wedding could be improvised ; and a well-matched pair, whose course of true love had been hitherto their poverty, joyfully availed themselves of the opportunity. Captain Samuells has kindly baffled by favored me with a note of the result, from which I take the following :—

The proposal must emanate from the father of the girl, whose duty it is to spot a bridegroom as soon as his daughter becomes marriageable. We may presume that he consults his child before he makes any overtures in her behalf, and knows well the house to which her inclination would guide her. If the offer is favorably received, the father of the selected swain visits the proposer, sees the girl, and leaves his first offering at the shrine of her beauty in gallons of rice beer. The contracting parties then agree as to the guerdon that is to be paid to the father of the girl ; this is not paid in cattle, as in Singbhum, or in cash, but in rice, and four *mans* of grain are deemed as very fair equivalent, so cheap are women held. The girl's father then invites his friends to a feast, and announces the engagement, and the next stage is the solemn delivery of the stipulated bonus in rice. This is brought and measured out by the groom's best man, and it is the privilege of the bridesmaids to thwart the proceeding by pilfering from the heap, and the best man and his friends have to make occasional raids after the girls, who, if caught, pay penalty as bridesmaids should.

The marriage ceremony takes place eight days after the delivery of the rice. In the evening, the bridegroom's cavalcade proceed to the bride's residence, his gallant comrades all mounted and careering on hobby horses ! made of bamboos, except one warrior, who bestrides a representation of an elephant ! The groom, however, is borne on the shoulders of his best man, clad all in white, and crowned with a chaplet of reeds. They hault at a short distance from the bride's house, and there await her party. Presently emerges a troop of girls all singing, headed by the mother of the bride, bearing on her head a vessel of water surmounted by a lighted *chiragh* (lamp). When they get near **[234]** enough to the cavaliers, they pelt them with balls of boiled rice, then coyly retreat, followed of course by the young men ; but the girls make a stand at the door of the bride's house, and suffer none to enter till they have paid toll in presents to the bridesmaids. The party is now received by the bride's brother, who appears with offerings of water and food ; the bridegroom dismounts and seats himself on the ground, and the bride's mother coming forward stuffs between his jaws five mouthfuls of cooked food. She then washes his mouth, gives him a kiss, and invites him to go inside ; but here the best man interposes demanding guerdon, and till this has been paid refuses to allow the bridegroom to advance a step.

In the inner court-yard a bower is constructed of leafy branches of the *sal* tree supported on a frame-work of bamboos. In the centre is the 'Bhanwar', here represented by a bamboo post passing through the canopy, round which the bride and bridegroom have to make a certain number of revolutions. It rises from a platform on which mats made of fresh green leaves are spread for the young couple and their chief supporters.

The bridegroom on entering the court-yard is conducted by the women to the inner apartments, and presented to the bride ; then with their garments tied together they are both led out and seated in their places in the bower. At this time some of the young men are invited to go inside to partake of a repast prepared for them, and whilst they are so engaged, the two fathers wash the feet of the young couple. There is then a pause in the ceremonies, of which the lively bridesmaids avail themselves to pour on the unfortunate bridegroom a torrent of not very delicate chaff.

Further preparations are now made for the Bhanwar ceremony. A vessel full of water and a lighted lamp are placed near the pole, and a curry-stone on which is arranged seven little heaps of rice and turmeric. When all is ready the chief bridesmaid and best man lead the young couple once round the post, then leave them to perform the remainder of the revolutions themselves, and each time as they approach the curry-stone, the bridegroom causes his bride to kick away one of the heaps of rice and turmeric. When the seventh is knocked off, the best man seizes the pole and violently shakes it, and on this the people all exclaim, "It is done." The wedded pair are then taken inside, and after spending some time together, come out to receive the congratulations of their friends, and retire again to the chamber prepared for them. Next morning all adjourn to the camp of the *barat*[62], where a breakfast is provided by the father of the bride.

Captain Samuells was unable to induce a Muasi to die, in order that he might, as an eye-witness, describe what then takes place ; but I have said enough of the funeral ceremonies and cenotaphs of the cognate tribes, and here close my account of the Kolarians.

[Pages 235-242 of the original edition contained *Vocabularies of the Tribes described in Group VII.* In the present reprint this is put as *Appendix V.*]

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[62] The bridegroom's party.

GROUP VIII

DRAVIDIAN

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

[243] The Dravidian element enters more largely into the composition of the population of Bengal than is generally supposed. I believe that a large majority of the tribes described in the foregoing pages as Hinduised aborigines, might with propriety have been included in this group. The people called Bhuiyas diffused through most of the Bengal districts and massed in the jungle and tributary estates of Chutia Nagpur and Orissa, certainly belong to it, and if I am right in my conjecture regarding the Kocch nation, they are of the same stock. I roughly estimate the Bhuiyas at two and a half millions, and the Kocch at a million and a half, so that we have in these two peoples about one-tenth of the Bengal population, who in all probability should be classed as Dravidian.

But my design in the present division of the subject is to treat only of tribes who have preserved the rudiments of an original language having more or less connection with the Tamil or Dravidian tongues. They comprise four great divisions of the aborigines, numbering, in all about one million and one hundred thousand souls, as follows :—

Oraons of Chutia Nagpur and other places	600,000
Rajmahal Hillmen	400,000
Gonds in Bengal	50,000
Kandhs in Bengal	50,000

The bulk of the Gond population is in the Central Provinces, where they have been numbered at a million and a half. The Oraons and Rajmahalis are for the most part located in Bengal, but the form of speech which they have both retained, connects them closely with the Tamil and Telugu-speaking people. The languages of the more civilized of the southern nations have been largely enriched by drafts from the Sanskrit source, but the rudiments of the primitive speech have been singularly preserved notwithstanding the submission of the upper and civilized classes to Brahmanical institutions and their adoption of the Hindu religian. Dr. Muir observes of the Brahmans that "though by their superior civilization and energey they placed themselves at the head of the Dravidian communities, they must have been so inferior in numbers to the Dravidian inhabitants as to render it impracticable to dislodge the primitive speech of the country and to replace it by their own language. They would, therefore, be compelled to acquire the Dravidian dialect." Thus, though breaking up into different nations, there is a marked uniformity between the Tamil, Telugu, Canarese, and Malayalim **[244]** languages and sufficient accord between them and the dialects of the Gonds and other hill tribes to substantiate their affinity. The Kandhs are of Madras rather than of Bengal, and they too extend into dependencies of the Central Provinces. The vocabularies appended to this chapter show less resemblance between the Dravidian languages and the Kandh and Savara, of which specimens are given ; but in respect to the last-mentioned tribes, the information I possess is very inadequate for the purposes of comparison. I do not venture to enter on any disquisition regarding the origin of the Dravidian people, but quote the following passage from the appendix to the second volume of Dr. Muir's Sanskrit Texts,[63] as comprising the theories or surmises on the subject now commonly received.

"Regarding the question whether the non-Aryan tribes of the north and south are themselves of the same stock, Dr. Caldwell remarks that the Dravidians may be confidently regarded as the earliest inhabitants of India ; or at least the earliest that extend from the north-west, but it is not so easy to determine whether they are the people whom the Aryans found in possession or whether they had already been expelled from the north by the irruption of another Scythian nation." Without deciding this point positively, Dr. Caldwell is led by the apparent differences between the Dravidian languages and the aboriginal element in the northern vernaculars to incline to the supposition that the Dravidian idiom must belong to an older stage of Scythian speech ; and if this view be correct, it seems to follow that the ancestors of the Scythian or non-Aryan portion of the North Indian population must have immigrated into India at a later period than the Dravidians ; and must have expelled the Dravidians from the greater portion of Northern India before they were themselves subjugated by a new race of Aryan invaders from the north-west. In any case Dr. Caldwell is persuaded that it was not by the Aryans that the Dravidians were expelled from Northern India, and that as no reference occurs either in Sanskrit or Dravidian to any hostilities between these two races, their primitive relations could never have been otherwise than amicable. The pre-Aryan Scythians, by whom Dr. Caldwell supposes that the Dravidians may have been expelled from the northern provinces, are not, he considers, to be confounded with the Kolas, Santals, Bhils,[64] Doms, and other original tribes of the north, who, he supposes, may have retired into the forests before the Dravidians or like the Bhutan tribes have entered into India from the north-east. The language of the forest tribes Dr. Caldwell conceives to exhibit no affinity with the aboriginal element in the North Indian vernaculars. We have, therefore, according to the views thus summarily expounded, four separate strata, so to speak, of Indian population :—

'*First* and earliest, the forest tribes such as the Kolas, Santals, Bhils &c., who may have entered India from the north-east.

Second—The Dravidians, who entered India from the north-west and either advanced voluntarily towards their ultimate seats in the south of the peninusla, or were driven by the pressure of subsequent hordes following them in the same direction.

[245] *Third*—We have the race (alluded to at the end of the preceding head No. 2) of Scythian or non-Aryan immigrants from the north-west, whose language afterwards united with the Sanskrit to form the Prakrit dialect of Northern India.

Fourth—The Aryan invaders.'

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[63] Dr. Muir's *Sanskrit Texts*, Volume II, pp. 485 to 487.

[64] I do not think that in the above extract the Bhils are correctly associated with the Kolas and Santals. From such fragments of their language as I have seen, I incline to the opinion that they are Dravidian, not Kolarian ; but it is difficult to determine as they apparently retain very few words of their primitive speech.

SECTION 1

THE ORAONS

Geographical distribution : The Khurnkh or Oraons of Chutia Nagpur are the people best known in many parts of India as 'Dhangars', a word that from its apparent derivation (*dang* or *dhang*, a hill) may mean any hillmen, but amongst several tribes of the southern Tributary Mahals, the terms Dhangar and Dhangarin mean the youth of the two sexes both in highland and lowland villages, and it cannot be considered as the national designation of any particular tribe. The Oraons are found massed in the northern and western parts of Chutia Nagpur proper, in the eastern parts of Sirguja and Jashpur, and scattered in Singbhum, Gangpur, Bonai, and Hazaribagh, all in the Chutia Nagpur province, and in Shambalpur of the Central Provinces; but all the scattered colonies are offshoots from the nucleus of the race in the districts first mentioned.

Numerical strength : The Oraons in the Lohardagga District, which includes the whole of Chutia Nagpur proper, number 362,480, in Sirguja about 20,000, Jashpur 25,000, and diffused through the other districts mentioned above, employed in the tea districts, in the Mauritius, Demarara, and other places, there are as many more as would, I think, make up a total of 600,000.

Migrations : According to the traditions I have received from the most venerable and learned of my Oraon acquaintances, the tribe has gradually migrated from the western coast of India. Some of the elders point to Gujrat as the starting point, by others the Konkan is given as the cradle of the race (the latter derivation is adopted by the Rev. William Luther of the Chutia Nagpur Mission, who has kindly favored me with an account of the tribe written by himself), and thence, it is supposed, is derived the name Khurnkh, by which they invariably call themselves. Oraon appears to have been assigned to them as a nickname, possibly with reference to their many migrations and proneness to roam. The people of the Konkan are called Kaunkanas in the topographical list from the *Mahabharata* in the *Vishnu Purana*, but the affection of the Oraons for gutturals is marvellous.

The Oraons all agree in this, that they were for many generations settled on the Rohtas and adjoining hills and in the Patna District, and they say that they were driven from that part of the country by the Muhammadans, but as they declare they were in Chutia Nagpur before the birth of Phani Mukuta Rai, the first Nagbangsi Raja, and the present Raja of that illustrious race claims to be the 52nd in descent from Phani Mukuta, they must have been under the sway of the Nagbangsis before Muhammad was born.

The Oraons have a tradition that when driven from Rohtas, they divided into two parties. One under the chief went north towards the Ganges and eventually occupied the Rajmahal hills, the other under the chief's younger brother went south-east. This tradition of a separation is borne out by the evident affinity in language, and similarity [246] in customs of the Oraons and Rajmahalis, and, though the latter do not acknowledge the relationship, their common origin may be considered as established ; and as the Rajmahalis are Malas or Malavas, it may be assumed that the Oraons are Malayas too.

Leaving Rohtas they proceeded up the Son into Palamau, and pursuing their course eastward along the Koel found themselves eventually on the highlands of Chutia Nagpur.

They emerged on the north-western and western portions of the plateau, where they found but a few scattered colonies of the Munda race, and, according to the tradition which I have received, were permitted to settle without opposition from that people. The Rev. William Luther records that they attacked and dislodged the Mundas who retreated into the hills bordering on Singbhum, but it is difficult to believe that the Oraons ever vanquished the progenitors of the Larka Kols, and after minute enquires I do not find any such tradition in the part of the country alluded to. There are still a few Mundas in the specially Oraon quarter of Chutia Nagpur, who are acknowledged and looked up to as the descendants of the founders of the villages in which they live. This is hardly compatible with the supposition that they were subjugated and driven out by the new arrivals. The Oraons, indeed, maintain that they were then a more advanced people than the Mundas, and that they introduced cultivation by ploughs into Chutia Nagpur. This may be true, for the Mundas are still partial to the *daho* or *Jhum* system of tillage so prevalent among the Indo-Chinese families.

Geographical features of the district : The country thus colonized is the most gently undulating portion of the Chutia Nagpur plateau, lying between the sources of the Koel, the Damudar, and the Subarnarekha, and comprising the well cultivated tract more than forty miles in breadth between the towns of Lohardagga and Ranchi. In these days it presents to view vast areas of terraced rice-fields, divided by swelling uplands, some well wooded with groves of mango, tamarind, and other useful and ornamental trees, some bearing remnants of the ancient forests preserved from the days when the axe was first heard in them, as a refuge for the startled Sylvan sprites. Still more remarkable as landmarks are the protuberant rocks which on all sides meet the eyes, either in great fragments of granite and gneiss fantastically piled up so as to appear in the distance like heaps of ruins hundreds of feet in height, or majestically rising to the same altitude in huge semiglobular masses, like domes of sunken temples. In many places acres of rock just show above ground, as if the crust of the earth had been there stripped bare, and such spots the Oraons especially affect as sites for villages : the flat or gently undulating rock affording them threshing floors, that only require to be swept, hard surfaces on which to spread out their grain and cowdung fuel to dry, holes which they can use as mortars for the pounding of their rice, and very convenient dancing places.

Besides these features the landscape is generally bounded on one or more sides by ranges of hills rising to fourteen hundred feet above the average altitude of the plateau, or three thousand four hundred feet above the level of the sea.

Houses : The domiciles of the humble men who claim to be the original lords of the soil assort but ill with such grandeur of scenery. The Oraons are wanting in the organ of constructiveness, and their huts, badly built, and incapable of affording decent accommodation to a family, are huddled together **[247]** in a manner little conducive to convenience, health, or decorum. Groups of houses are built in rows of three or four facing each other, and forming a small enclosed court, seldom properly drained or cleaned. In these huts the human beings and cattle have common tenancy. The pigs alone have buildings appropriated to their own use.

The walls of the huts are of mud, but, when constructed of the red laterite soil of which the uplands are generally composed, they are as durable as if built of brick and mortar, though but a foot in breadth ; there is no limit to the permanency of such walls when protected by roofs ; and, even when exposed, all that is necessary to render them durable is to prevent the direct action of the rains by some slight covering of leaves or straw by way of coping. The worst of this method of building is that holes are dug to supply the material, which are ever afterward receptacles of filth and hot-beds of fever.

Very few villages are now found tenanted only by Oraons. The majority have been assigned to middlemen, whose more pretentious tiled dwellings with their upper stories look down patronisingly or contemptuously on the low thatched gable-ended huts of the aborigines, and it may be surely predicated that the grander the manor house the poorer and more squalid are the huts that surround it.

Tenures : The constitution of an Oraon village is the same as that of the Mundari. In each the hereditary Munda, or headman, and the hereditary Pahn have their lands on privileged erms as the descendants of the founders of the village. The hereditary estates of the two families are called 'Khunts' ; there is sometimes a third Khunt called 'the Mahato,' on all of which a very low rent is fixed, but there are also conditions of service attached. These may now be commuted to cash payments at the instance of either party.

Priests : There is also in charge of the Pahn the land dedicated to the service of the village gods. The priestly office does not always go from father to son. The latter may be ignorant and disqualified, he may be a Christian, therefore when vacated it is filled by divination. The magic *sup*, or winnowing sieve, properly spelled like a divining rod, conducts the person holding it to the door of the man most fitted to hold the office. A priest there must be ; an Oraon community cannot get on without one. The fate of thev illage is in his hands ; in their own phraseology it is said that 'he makes its affairs.' He is also master of the revels which are for the most part connected with religious rites. The doctrine of the Oraons is, that man best pleases the gods when he makes merry himself, so that acts of worship and propitiatory sacrifices are always associated with feasting, drinking, dancing, and lovemaking.

The Munda or Mahato is the functionary to whom the proprietor of the village looks for its secular administration. In contradistinction to the Pahn who *mākes* (*banata*) the affairs, the Mahato *administers* (*chalata*) them, and he may be removed if he fail to give satisfaction.

The Bachelor hall : In all the older Oraon villages, when there is any conservation of ancient customs, there is a house called the Dhumkuria, in which all the bachelors in the village must, when not absent from it, sleep under penalty of a fine. Precisely similar institutions are met with amongst the Hill Bhuiyas of Keonjhur and Bonai, and, from the notes left by the late Rev. S. Hislop, I find, they **[248]** are common to other Dravidian tribes. I have already observed that the domiciles of the Oraons have insufficient accommodation for a family, so that separate quarters for the young men are a necessity. The same remark applies to the young unmarried women, and it is a fact that they do not sleep in the house with their parents. Where they do sleep is somewhat of a mystery. They are generally frank enough when questioned about their habits, but on this subject there is always a certain amount of reticence, and I have seen girls quietly withdraw when it was mooted. I am told that in some villages a separate building is provided for them like the Dhumkuria, in which they consort under the guardianship of an elderly duenna, but I believe the more common practice is to distribute them amongst the houses of the widows, and this is what the girls themselves assert if they answer at all when the question is asked; but however billeted, it is well known that they often find their way to the bachelor's hall, and in some villages actually sleep there. I not long ago saw a Dhumkuria in a Sirguja village in which the boys and girls all slept every night. They themselves admitted the fact, the elders of the village confirmed it, and appeared to think that there was no impropriety in the arrangement. That it leads to promiscuous intercourse is most indignantly denied, and it may be there is safety in the multitude; but it must sadly blunt all innate feelings of delicacy. Yet the young Oraon girls are modest in demeanour, their manner gentle, language entirely free from obscenity, and whilst hardly ever failing to present their husbands with a pledge of love in due course *after* marriage, instances of illegitimate births are rare, though they often remain unmarried for some years after reaching maturity. Long and strong attachments between young couples are common. Dhumkuria lads are no doubt great flirts, but each has a special favorite amongst the young girls of his acquaintance, and the girls well know to whose touch or pressure in the dance each maiden's heart is especially responsive. Liaisons between boys and girls of the same village seldom end in marriage. It is considered more respectable to bring home a bride from a distance,[65] but it does not follow from this that there is no preliminary lovemaking. Maidens of one village go frequently on visits to their friends in another and stay several days, and sisters can always arrange to have for visitors the girls whom their brothers are best pleased to see. It is singular that in matters of the affections, the feelings of these semisavages should be more in unison with the sentiments and customs of the highly organised western nations than with the methodical and unromantic heartschooling of their Aryan fellow countrymen.

The Dhumkuria fraternity are under the severest penalties bound down to secrecy in regard to all that takes place in their dormitory; and even girls are punished if they dare to tell tales. They are not allowed to join in the dances till the offence is condoned. They have a regular system of fagging in this curious institution. The small boys serve those of larger growth, shampoo their limbs, and comb their hair, &c., and they are sometimes subjected to severe discipline to *make men* of them.

The Akhra : Immediately in front of the Dhumkuria is the dancing arena, called, 'Akhra,' an open circus about forty feet in diameter with a stone or a post marking its centre. It is surrounded by seats for tired dancers [249] or non-dancing spectators, and shaded by fine old tamarind trees that give a picturesque effect to the animated scene, and afford in their gigantic stems convenient screens for moonlight or starlight flirtations. During the festive seasons of the year, dancing at the Akhra commences shortly after dark every night, and, if the supply of the home brew holds out, is often kept up till sunrise. Very rakish do the dancers appear in the early morning after a night so spent. On some occasions the circus is laid down with red earth which pulverises under the many twinkling feet and rises in a lurid

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[65] It is singular how universal this feeling is. Even amongst ourselves there is always a fiction that the bridegroom comes from afar for his bride, it would be indecorous for him to appear in church as if he came from the same quarter, and he bears her away to some distant land after her marriage.

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cloud about the dancers, till the garments, the dusky skins, and the black hair of the performers become all of brick-dust hue ; ordinarily on the party breaking up at dawn, they proceed from the Akhra to their usual avocations and work as cheerfully and vigourously as if their night had been passed in sound sleep. This says much for the wholesomeness of the beverage that supplies them with the *staying* power.

Physical traits : The Oraon youths, though with features very far from being in accordance with the statutes of beauty, are of a singularly pleasing class, their faces beaming with animation and good humour. Their costume is peculiar, and shows off to great advantage their supple, pliant, light figures, which are often models of symmetry. They are a small race averaging 5′2″, but there is perfect proportion in all parts of their form, they have not the squat appearance or muscular development of the short Himalayan tribes ; but though lightly framed like the Hindu, they are better limbed. There is about the young Oraon a jaunty air and mirthful expression that distinguishes him from the Munda or Ho, who has more of the dignified gravity that is said to characterise the North American Indian. The Oraon is particular about his personal appearance only so long as he is unmarried, but he is in no hurry to withdraw from the Dhumkuria community, and generally his first youth is passed before he resigns his decorative propensities.

Coiffure of the men : He wears his hair long, gathered in a knot behind, supporting, when he is in gala costume, a red or white turban. In the knot are wooden combs and other implements useful and ornamental with numerous ornaments of brass and looking glass. At the very extremity of the roll of hair gleams a small circular mirror set in brass, from which and also from his ears, bright brass chains with spiky pendants dangle, and as he moves with the springy elastic step of youth and tosses his head like a high mettled steed in the buoyancy of his animal spirits, he sets all his glittering ornaments in motion and displays as he laughs a row of teeth, sound, white, and regular, that give light and animation to his dusky features.

Dress of the men : His middle garment consists of a long narrow strip of cloth carefully adjusted, but in such a manner as to leave him most perfect freedom of limb, and allow the full play of the muscles of the thigh and hip to be seen. He wears nothing in the form of a coat ; his decorated neck and chest are undraped, displaying how the latter tapers to the waist, which the young dandies compress within the smallest compass. In addition to the cloth, there is always round the waist a girdle of cords made of *tusser*-silk, or of cane. This is now a superfluity, but it is no doubt the remnant of a more primitive costume, perhaps the support of the antique fig leaves.

Out of the age of ornamentation nothing can be more untidy or unprepossessing than the appearance of the Oraon. The ornaments are nearly all discarded, hair utterly **[250]** neglected, and for raiment any rags are used. This applies both to males and females of middle age.

Dress of the women : The ordinary dress of the women depends somewhat on the degree of civilization of the part of the country in which you make your observations. In the villages about Lohardagga, a cloth from the waist to a little below the knee is the common working dress ; but where there is more association with other races, the persons of young females are decently clad in the coarse cotton cloth of the country, white with red border. Made up garments are not worn except by the converts to Christianity. The one cloth six yards long is gracefully adjusted so as to form a shawl and a petticoat. The Oraons do not, as a rule, bring the upper end of the garment over the head and so give it the functions also of a veil, as it is worn by the Bengali women ; they simply throw the end of the dress over the left shoulder, and it falls with its fringe and ornamented border prettily over the back of the figure. Vast quantities of red beads and a large heavy brass ornament shaped like a torque are worn round the neck. On the left hand are rings of copper, as many as can be induced on each finger up to the first joint, on the right hand a smaller quantity ; rings on the second toe only, of brass or bell metal, and anklets and bracelets of the same material are also worn.

Coiffure of the women : The hair is, as a rule, coarse and rather inclined to be frizzy but by dint of lubrication they can make it tolerably smooth and amenable, and false hair or some other substance is used to give size to the mass (the chignon) into which it is gathered, not immediately behind, but more or less on one side, so that it lies on the neck just behind, and touching, the right ear, and flowers are arranged in a receptacle made for them between the roll of hair and the head. The ears are, as usual with such people, terribly mutilated for decorative purposes ; spikes and rings are inserted into holes made in the upper cartilage, and the lobe is widely distended.

When in dancing costume on grand occasions they add to their head-dress plumes of heron feathers, and a gay bordered scraf is tightly bound round the upper part of the body.

Features : Although the Oraons, when young, both male and female, have countenances which are pleasant to look upon from their good humoured and guileless expression, they must, on the whole, be regarded as a dark complexioned and by no means well favored race. When we see numbers of them massed together as in a market, the features that we find to predominate are excess of jaws and mouth, thick lips pushed out by the projection of the jaws and teeth, a defect which age increases, the teeth becoming more and more porrect till they appear to radiate outwards from the upper jaw. The forehead is low and narrow, but not, as a rule, receding, and the eyes have nothing very peculiar about them, often bright and full with long lashes and straight set, sometimes small and dim but not oblique. These upper features give them a human and intelligent expression notwithstanding the Simian characteristics of the lower. There is the indentation usual in the Turanian races between the frontal and nasal bones, but the latter are more pronounced than we find them in the Lohitic tribes. The color of the majority is of the darkest brown, almost black, but the observer may not only pick out individuals in the crowd who are of complexion as light as the average Hindu, but may find villages in [251] which all the Oraon inhabitants are light brown to tawny. The fact is, they have to a surprising degree the faculty of assimilating their own color and features to those of the people amongst whom they dwell, and it may be generally remarked that when there are good looking Aryans in the same village with Oraons, the complexions of the latter become brighter, and the features more in accordance with a classical standard of beauty. Not long ago a man came to me whom I took to be a follower of the prophet from the west country, but I ascertained that he was a scion of a respectable Oraon family. I went to his village and fonnd it to be a small place inhabited by Oraons and Pathans ; the latter had been settled there for many generations, and were living on terms of perfect amity with the primitive inhabitants notwithstanding the intervention of pigs. I could not help noticing aloud the singular resemblance between the two families ; the remark was received with some indignation, but more laughter, and the indignation was quite subdued when I told those concerned that women were in the habit of bringing forth children in the image of the people they *saw* daily, as well as with the lineaments of their ancestors. The old wives all acquiesced in this view.

Tattooing : The Oraon women are all tattooed in childhood with the three marks on the brow and two on each temple that distinguish a majority of the Munda females. One must have taken it from the other, and as we find the isolated Juangs and scattered Kharrias have the same marks, I consider it established that the Kols originated the fashion. The young men burn marks on their forearm ; this is part of the discipline of the Dhumkuria, one of the ordeals that the boys have to go through to make them hardy and manly. Girls when adult, or nearly so, have themselves further tattooed on the arms and back.

Food : The Oraons live generously, more frequently partaking of flesh than their neighbours, but their cooking is wretched, and they have themselves a proverb[66] expressive of the low state of their culinary skill. Their chief food is rice and the pulse called *urid* or *kalai*. They seldom cultivate vegetables, but many wild plants and the tender leaves of the *pipul* (*ficus religiosa*) and other trees are used by them as pot herbs. Besides esteeming field mice and such small game as great delicacies, they eat the flesh of bullocks, goats, buffaloes, sheep, tigers, bears, jackals, foxes, snakes, lizards, most birds, all fish, tortoises, and large frogs, but prefer pork to everything, and their villages swarm with pigs. They indulge to an immoderote degree in rice beer, which is made in every house, and it is not an uncommon event for a traveller to arrive at an Oraon village and find every soul in it drunk. I recently noted the following entry in the journal of an officer out on duty : "Arrived at the village of—at 10 A.M., but unable to proceed to business, as the people are all drunk." They will drink spirits when they have the opportunity, but indulge in no narcotics except tobacco, which the males chew and smoke ; of *ganja*, *bhang*, and opium they have a wholesome dread.

Births : Women think little of the perils of childbirth, and perform the office of midwife for each other ; yet during labor, and for fifteen days afterwards, the mother is liable to the influence of a spirit called Chordewan, who, appearing in the form of a cat, causes injury to the womb ; to avoid which [252] the husband must all the time indicated keep a fire burning, the woman must live on gruel. When the woman is considered fit to appear in public, the child is named. A number of old crones meet for the purpose, and sit like witches round a vessel filled with water into which a grain of rice is thrown as the name just thought of for the child is announced. If the grain sinks the name is adopted, if it floats, it is rejected and another chosen. The name of the day of the week is often given, as Etwar to a boy, Etwari to a girl born on Sunday, Sumar and Sumari for Monday, but these are Hindu terms ; they have no such names for the week in their own language. Most of the common names are, by a change of termination, adapted to male or female, as Birsa, Birsi, Dulka, Dulki, Chamra, Chamri. The Oraons attach no importance to the operation of tonsure, but the heads of young children are kept shorn till they are six or seven years of age, after which the hair is allowed to grow till the girl approaches maturity ; then it is incumbent on her to gather it in a knot behind, and this process enforces a considerable change in her habits. As a girl with cropped head, or locks flowing, she may eat whatever food is given to her, no matter by whom it has been prepared, but when she obeys her mother's injunction to 'bind her hair', she is restricted to what is cooked by her own people. Young men retain this freedom of appetite till their marriage.

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[66] Khurnkhar nunna akhnai ona calnar : 'the Oraons are good laborers, but bad cooks,' Rev. W, Luther's Ms.

Marriages : From what has already been stated relative to courtship, it will be understood that the marriage of children is not in favor amongst the Oraons. When a young man makes up his mind to marry, his parents or guardians go through a form of selection for him ; but it is always a girl that he has already selected for himself, and between whom and him there is a perfect understanding. The parents, however, have to arrange all preliminaries, including the price of the damsel, which is sometimes as low as Rs. 4. In the visits that are interchanged by the negotiators, omens are carefully observed by the Oraons, as by the Mundas, and there are, consequently, similar difficulties to be overcome ; but when all is settled, the bridegroom proceeds with a large party of his friends, male and female, to the bride's house. Most of the males have warlike weapons, real or sham, and as they approach the village of the bride's family, the young men from thence emerge, also armed, as if to repel the invasion, and a mimic fight ensues, which, like a dissolving-view, blends pleasantly into a dance. In this the bride and bridegroom join, riding each on the hips of one of their friends.

A bower is constructed, in front of the residence of the bride's father, into which the bride and bridegroom are carried by women, and made to stand on a curry-stone, under which is placed a sheaf of corn, resting on a plough yoke. Here the mystery of the *Sindur dan* is performed, but the operation is carefully screened from view, first by cloths thrown over the young couple, secondly by a circle of their male friends, some of whom hold up a screen cloth, while others keep guard with weapons upraised, and look very fierce, as if they had been told off to cut down intruders, and were quite prepared to do so. In Oraon marriages, the bridegroom stands on the curry-stone behind the bride, but, in order that this may not be deemed a concession to the female, his toes are so placed as to tread on her heels. The old women under the cloth are very particular about this, as if they were especially interested in providing that the heel of the woman should be properly bruised. Thus posed, the man stretches over the [253] girl's head, and daubs her forehead and crown with the red powder, *sindur*, and if the girl is allowed to return the compliment (it is a controverted point whether she should do so or not), she performs the ceremony without turning her head, reaching back over her own shoulder and just touching his brow. When this is accomplished, a gun is fired, and then, by some arrangement, vessels full of water, placed over the bower, are capsized, and the young couple, and those who stand near them, receive a drenching shower-bath. They now retire into an apartment prepared for them, ostensibly to change their clothes, but they do not emerge for some time, and when they appear they are saluted as man and wife. Dancing is kept up during their retirement, one of the performers executing a *pas seul* with a basket on her head, which is said to contain the trousseau.

The Oraons have no prescribed wedding garments. They do not follow the Hindu custom of using saffron colored robes on such occasions. The bride is attired in ordinary habiliments. No special pains are taken to make her lovely for the occasion. The bridegroom is more dressed than usual. He wears a long coat and a turban. Nor have the Oraons any special days or seasons for marriages. The ceremony may take place in any month of the year, but, with all natives, the hot, dry months are generally selected, if possible ; there is not then much work on hand. Granaries are full, and they prefer those months for marching and camping out.

When the bride reaches her husband's house, food is offered to her, but she scornfully or sulkily refuses to touch it, and continues in this temper till something is presented to her that she considers worthy of her acceptance, then she unbends, and, smiling on her new friends, eats.

Friendship : The young Oraon girls always appear on friendly terms with each other, but a custom obtains amongst them by which the ties of friendship are made almost as binding as those of marriage. It is not exclusively an Oraon practice, but it is more generally resorted to by the girls of that tribe than by other maidens.

Two girls feel a growing attachment for each other. They work together, sing together, and strive to be always together, till they grow so fond, that a sudden thought strikes one or other of them to say "let us swear eternal friendship." The formula being in Chutia Nagpur Hindi—"Toi uor main *gui jurabi* amren phul lagabi." Then each plucks flowers and neatly arranges them in the other's hair. They exchange necklaces and embrace, and afterwards jointly, from their own means, prepare a little feast, to which they invite their friends of their own sex, who are made witnesses to the compact, and this ceremony is considered complete.

From that hour they must never address, or speak of each other, by name. The sworn friend is "my *gui*", or my flower, or something of the kind. They are as particular on this point as are Hindu women, not to mention the names of their husbands.

A young man makes a demonstration of his affection for a girl in a similar fashion. He sticks flowers in the mass of her back hair, and if she subsequently return the compliment, it is concluded that she desires a continuance of his attention. The next step may be an offering to his lady love of some nicely grilled field mice, which the Oraons declare to be the most delicate of food. Tender looks and squeezes whilst both are engaged in the dance are not much thought of. They are regarded merely **[254]** as the result of emotions naturally arising from pleasant contiguity and exciting strains ; but when it comes to flowers and field mice, matters look serious.

Tribal divisions : The Oraons are divided into tribes, and are what a recent author on the subject of primitive marriage calls exogamous, as are also the Mundas. I have shown above that the Oraons preserve very remarkably the symbol of the marriage by capture. The family or tribal names are usually those of animals or plants, and when this is the case, the flesh of some part of the animal or fruit of the tree is tabooed to the tribe called after it.

The following are names of tribes :—

Tirki	....	....	must not eat *Tirki*, young mice.
Ekhar	....	....	must not eat head of tortoise.
Kirpotas	....	....	do not eat the stomach of the pig.
Lakrar	....	....	must not eat tiger's flesh.
Kujrar	....	....	must not eat oil from this tree or sit in its shade.

Gedhiar	must not eat	Kite.
Khakhar	must not eat	Crow.
Minjar	must not eat	Eel.
Kerketar	must not eat	The bird so called.
Barar	must not eat from the leaves of the *Ficus Indicus.* (These are used as plates).	

There is no such thing as slavery among the Oraons, many are in a position to employ farm laborers, and those are generally engaged for the year. They receive their food daily, and two or three rupees for the year's work, the last instalment of which is always paid at the Saturnalia called the Magh festival.

Dances and music : The Oraons have adopted all the Munda dances, and improved on them. They have one called the Oraon's *jadura*, which is quite a refinement on the ordinary *jadura*, most complicated in step and figure, but the movements in it are executed with wonderful precision by girls accustomed to dance it together. They commence at a very early age to learn this accomplishment. Children may be seen practising their steps whose powers of toddling are but rudimentary. They positively dance as soon as they can walk, and sing as soon as they can talk. Their voices are more musical than those of the generality of native children. They are naturally accurate timists, and have good ears ; and the choir singing *in parts* of the Oraon and Munda converts is most remarkable. They acquire with facility, and sing correctly pieces of sacred music, that very few English parish church choirs would attempt.

The tribe I am treating of are seen to best advantage at the great national dance meetings called Jatras. They are attended by all classes of the people, but the most conspicuous groups are those that come from the Oraon, or from the Oraon-Munda villages.

The Jatras are held on appointed days, once a year, at different places chosen as convenient centres. They are generally large mango groves in the vicinity of old villages, formerly the head quarters of the Parha, and on the evening preceding the gathering, there is a sacrifice to the tutelary spirit, followed by a carousal in the village, and the elders of that village are sure to be all very drunk on the following morning.

[255] As a signal to the country round, the flags of each village are brought out and set up on the road that leads to the place of meeting. This incites the young men and maidens to hurry through their morning work and look up their Jatra dresses which are by no means ordinary attire. Those who have some miles to go put up their finery in a bundle to keep it fresh and clean, and proceed to some tank or stream in the vicinity of the tryst grove, and about two o'clock in the afternoon may be seen all around groups of girls laughingly making their toilettes in the open air and young men in separate parties similarly employed. When they are ready, the drums are beaten, huge horns are blown, and thus summoned, the group from each village forms its procession. In front are young men with swords and shields or other weapons, the village standard bearers with their flags and boys waving yaks' tails, or bearing poles with fantastic arrangements of garlands and wreaths intended to represent umbrellas of dignity. Sometimes a man riding on a wooden horse is carried horse and all by his friends as the Raja, and others assume the form of, or paint themselves up to represent, certain beasts of prey. Behind this motley group the main body form compactly together as a close column of dancers

in alternate ranks of boys and girls, and thus they enter the grove where the meeting is held in a cheery, dashing style, wheeling and countermarching, and forming lines, circles, and columns with grace and precision. The dance with these movements is called Khariah, and it is considered to be an Oraon rather than a Munda dance, though Munda girls join in it. When they enter the grove, the different groups join and dance the Khariah together, forming one vast procession and then a monstrous circle. The drums and musical instruments are laid aside, and it is by the voices alone that the time is given ; but as many hundreds, nay, thousands join, the effect is grand. In serried ranks so closed up that they appear jammed, they circle round in file, all keeping perfect step, but at regular intervals the strain is terminated by a *hururu*, which reminds one of Paddy's *huroosh* as he "welts the floor", and at the same moment they all face inwards and simultaneously jumping up come down on the ground with a resounding stamp that marks the finale of the movement, but only for a momentary pause. One voice with a startling yell takes up the strain again, a fresh start is made, and after gyrating thus till they tire of it, the ring breaks up, and separating into village groups they perform other dances independently till near sunset, then all go dancing home.

I have seen Jatras that were attended by not less than five thousand villagers, all in the happiest frame of mind, as if nothing could occur to ruffle the perfect good humour of each individual of the multitude. The elders are often muddled with beer, but never cross in their cups, and the young people are merry from excitement. The shop-keepers from the neighbouring towns attend and set up stalls, so that it becomes a kind of fair at which business in sweets and trinkets is brisk.

Banners : The banners exhibited at the Jatras are relics of the old Parha system. Properly it is not every village, but every Parha that may bear a distinctive flag, and it is a *casus belli*, if the ancient device of one village is improperly assumed by another. The banners are triangular in shape and of unusual size. They fly them plain white, plain ·red, and striped red and white. I have never seen any form of cross.

It is not an unfrequent occurrence in Oraon dances for the free joyous movements of one or more of the girls to be suddenly transformed into involuntarily spasmodic [256] action, somewhat akin to the demoniacal possession by Gansham, described in a previous chapter, and probably not far removed from what are known in some Christian countries as 'exaltations' in so-called revivals. Young girls of nervous temperament are most liable to these attacks. After dancing for some time, the motions of head, body, and legs appear to become intensified and cease to be voluntary, and though the girl seized usually drops, the violent rolling and nodding of the head and movements of the limbs continue. The bystanders in belief that they are dealing with the spirit by whom the girl is possessed unmercifully pummel her till she ceases to struggle, then after a few minutes of utter prostration, she revives, and resumes her place amongst the dancers as if nothing had happend. It is said, there is one particular strain which girls cannot long sing without being thus affected. I believe, it is the song which usually accompanies the patting of the ground movement described in the account of the Munda dances.

Religion : The religion of the Oraons is of a composite order. They have no doubt retained some portion of the belief that they brought with them to Chutia Nagpur, but coalescing with the Mundas and joining in their festivals and acts of public worship, they to a certain extent took up their ideas on religion and blended them with their own. There is, however, a material distinction between the religious systems of the two people. The Mundas have no symbols and make no representations of their gods ; the Oraons and all the cognates whom I have met with have always some visible object of worship, though it may be but a stone or a wooden post, or a lump of earth. Like the Mundas, they acknowledge a supreme God, adored as Dharmi or Dharmesh, the Holy One, who is manifest in the sun, and they regard Dharmesh as a perfectly pure, beneficient being, who created us and would in his goodness and mercy preserve us, but that his benevolent designs are thwarted by malignant spirits whom mortals must propitiate, as Dharmesh cannot or does not interfere, if the spirit of evil once fastens upon us. It is, therefore, of no use to pray to Dharmesh or to offer sacrifices to him ; so though acknowledged, recognised, and reverenced, he is neglected, whilst the malignant spirits are adored. Here we have a savage's solution of the antagonistic principles of good and evil, happiness and misery, and not a bad illustration of what untutored man, with no aspirations beyond this life, may imagine. How, they reason, could a benevolent and omniscient Creator subject his creatures to suffering ? Yet suffer they do, often without fault of their own, and to cause this there must be other powers at work, who act independently of and in opposition to the Creator. These malignant spirits afflict us, because (as children learn that dogs bark and bite) 'it is their nature to do so.' I do not think that Oraons have an idea that their sins are visited on them either in this world or in a world to come. It is not because they are wicked that their children or their cattle die, or their crops fail, or they suffer in body, it is only because some malignant demon has a spite against them, or is desirous of fleecing them. Their ideas of sin are limited. Thou shalt not commit adultery, thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour, is about as much of the decalogue as they would subscribe to. It is doubtful if they see any moral guilt in murder, though hundreds of them have suffered the extreme penalty of the law for this crime. They are ready to take life on very slight provocation, and in the gratification of their revenge an innocent child is as likely to suffer as the actual offender. There is one canon of the Mosaical law that they in former years [257] rigorously enforced,—"Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live." I have dwelt on this subject in treating of the Mundas, and need only say that the Oraons are quite as inveterate against reputed witches as the Mundas, and if left to themselves, the life of elderly females would be very insecure. As it is, a suspected old woman (and sometimes a young one, especially if she be the daughter of a suspected old one) is occasionally condemned, well drubbed, and turned out of the village, and she does not always survive the treatment she is subjected to.

Converts : If we analyse the views of most of the Oraon converts to Christianity, we shall, I think, be able to discern the influence of their pagan doctrines and superstitions in the motives that first led them to become catechumens. The Supreme Being who does not protect them from the spite of malevolent spirits has, they are assured, the Christians under His special care. They consider that, in consequence of this guardianship, the witches and *bhuts* have no power over Christians, and it is, therefore, good for them to join that body. They are taught that for the salvation of Christians one great sacrifice has been made, and they see that those who are baptized do not in fact reduce their live-stock to propitiate the evil spirits. They grasp at this notion, and long afterwards when they understand it better, the atonement, the mystical washing away of sin by the blood of Christ, is the doctrine on which their simple minds most dwell.

Casting out devils : I have not found amongst the pagan Oraons a trace of the high moral code that their cousins of the Rajmahal hills are said to have accepted. I consider that they have no belief whatever in a future state, whilst to the Rajmahalis is attributed a profound system of metempsychosis. The Oraons carry that doctrine no further than to suppose that men who are killed by tigers become tigers, but for other people death is an annihilation. As the sole object of their religious ceremonies is the propitiation of the demons who are ever thwarting the benevolent intentions of Dharmesh, they have no notion of a service of thanksgiving ; and so far, we may regard the religion of the Mundas as of a higher order than theirs. When suffering or misfortune befall a man, he consults an augur 'Ojha' as to the instrument of his affliction, and acts according to the advice given. The Ojha has it in his power to denounce a mortal or a particular devil. The method employed has been described in the account of the Mundas, and the result is the same. If a fellow-being is denounced, it is said that he has caused his familiar to possess and afflict the sufferer, and the denounced is seized and tortured, or beaten, to force him to effect the expulsion of the evil spirit. But the family or village Bhut may be accused ; the Ojha, under inspiration, of course, decides what is to be sacrificed, and frequently ruins, if he does not cure, the patient consulting him. In the process of propitiation, the fetish nature of the Oraon system is shown. Thesorcerer produces a small image of mud, and on it sprinkles a few grains of rice. If fowls are to be the victims, they are placed in front of this image, and if they peck at the rice it indicates that the particular devil is satisfied with the intention of his votaries, and the sacrifice proceeds. The flesh of the animals killed is appropriated by the sorcerer, so it is his interest to have a hecatomb, if possible.

Minor deities : In regard to the names and attributes of the devils, the Oraons who live with Mundas sacrifice to Marang Buru and all the Munda Bongas. The Oraons on the western portion of the plateau, where there are few Mundas, ignore the Bongas, and pay their devotion to Darha, the Sarna Burhi **[258]** (lady of the grove), and the village *Bhuts*, who have various names. Chanda, or Chandi, is the god or goddess of the chase and is always invoked preparatory to starting on great hunting expeditions. Any bit of rock, or stone, or excrescence on a rock, serves to represent this deity. The hill near Lodhma, known to the Mundas as Marang Buru, is held in great reverence by the Oraons. To the spirit of the hill, whom they call Baranda, they give bullocks and buffaloes, especially propitiating him as the Bhut, who when malignantly inclined frustrates God's designs of sending rain in due season to fertilize the earth.

In some parts of the country Darha is almost the only spirit they propitiate. If fowls are offered to him, they must be of divers colors, but once in three years he should have a sheep from his votaries ; and once in the same period a buffalo, of which the Ojha or Pahn gets a quarter. The Oraon must always have something material to worship, and for Darha a representation of a ploughshare is set up on an altar dedicated to him, and renewed every three years.

Ghosts : Besides this superstitious dread of the spirits above named, the Oraon's imagination tremblingly wanders in a world of ghosts. Every rock, road, river, and grove is haunted. They believe that women who die in childbirth become ghosts, called Chorail[67], and such ghosts are frequently met hovering about the tombstones, always clad in robes of white, their faces fair and lovely, but with backs black as charcoal, and inverted feet ; that is, they walk with their heels in front : they lay hold of passers-by and wrestle with them, and tickle them, and he is lucky, indeed, who, thus caught, escapes without permanent injuries. If, however, the man be brave and resolute, he may always overcome the ghost, but if the person caught is some luckless wight returning from a fair or dance, who, like Tam O'Shanter, had been "drinking divinely," woe betide him ! He is found next morning senseless, with a twisted neck, and the services of a sorcerer, or medicine-man are necessary to set him right again.

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[67] From Rev, Mr, Luther's Ms.

The Bhagats : Towards Lohardagga many Oraons take the name of Bhagat, the corruption of Bhakt, and attach themselves to some Brahman or Gosain who gives them 'Mantras'. The Bhagats, without absolutely abandoning the religious observances of their ancestors, adopt the worship of Siva or Mahadeo ; have in their houses, or on their premises, the usual monolithic emblem of that deity, and keep brazen images of Ganesh and other Hindu gods. The Bhagats rather discourage the unrestricted intercourse between the youth of the two sexes that their ancestors smiled upon, and do their best to keep their girls from joining in the dances, but the young men heed not the injunctions of the elders on this point, and the girls evade them as much as possible. The Bhagats conform to Hindu notions regarding what should be considered clean and unclean for food, and they will not eat or drink with the people of their own tribe who are not Bhagats. I have been informed by a Christian convert, who formerly belonged to the Bhagat fraternity, that in some villages near Lohardagga, they annually make an image of a man in wood, put clothes and ornaments on it, and present it before the altar of a Mahadeo. The person who officiates as priest on the occasion says :—"O Mahadeo, we sacrifice this man to you according to ancient customs. Give us rain in due season, and a plentiful harvest." Then, with one [259] stroke of the axe, the head of the image is cut off, and the body is removed and buried. The Gonds make a similar offering to their Baradeo, and it is not always in effigy that the human sacrifice is made. There are grounds for concluding that the practice was observed by all the peoples of Dravidian origin.

Festivals : The Oraons and Mundas keep the same festivals, but, according to Mr. Luther, the Karm is, with the former, the most important.

The Karm Festival : It is celebrated when the time arrives for planting out the rice grown in seed beds, and is observe by Hindus, as well as by Kols, and other tribes. On the first day of the feast, the villagers must not break their fast till certain ceremonies have been performed. In the evening, a party of young people, of both sexes, proceed to the forest, and cut a young Karma tree, or the branch of one, bearing which they return in triumph,—dancing, and singing, and beating drums,—and plant it in the middle of the 'Akhra.' After the performance of a sacrifice to the Karma Deota by the Pahn, the villagers feast, and the night is passed in dancing and revelry. Next morning all may be seen at an early hour in holiday array ; the elders in groups, under the fine old tamarind trees that surround the Akhra ; and the youth of both sexes, arm-linked in a huge circle, dancing round the Karma tree, which, festooned with garlands, decorated with strips of colored cloth and sham bracelets and necklets of plaited straw, and with the bright faces and merry laughter of the young people encirling it, reminds one of the gift-bearing tree so often introduced at our own great festival, and suggests the probability of some remote connection between the two. Preparatory to the festival, the daughters of the head men of the village cultivate blades of barley in a peculiar manner. The seed is sown in moist, sandy soil, mixed with a quantity of turmeric, and the blades sprout and unfold of a pale yellow, or primrose color. On the Karma day, these blades are taken up by the roots, as if for transplanting, and carried in baskets by the fair cultivators to the Akhra. They approach the Karma tree, and, prostrating themselves reverentially, place before it some of the plants. They then go round the company, and, like bridesmaids distributing wedding favors, present to each person a few of the yellow barley blades, and all soon appear, wearing, generally in their hair, this distinctive decoration of the festival. Then all join merrily in the Karma dances, and malignant, indeed, must be the *Bhut* who is not propitiated by so attractive an ovation. The morning revel closes with the removal of the Karma ; it is taken away by the merry throng and thrown into a stream or a tank, but after another feast, dancing and drinking are resumed ; and on the following morning, the effects of the two nights' dissipation are often, I fear, very palpable.

At the Karma feast, the children are all presented with new garments, but, lightly clad as they are, the expense of this to paterfamilias is not ruinous.

I have noticed that this festival is celebrated by Hindus as well as by the tribes I am describing, and the authority for observind it is a passage in the *Bhavishya Purana*, of which Babu Kalidas Palit has kindly favored me with a translation.

Narod having asked by what actions and *vratas* (religious observances), virtue, wealth, desire, and final emancipation, are to be attained, Narain replies :—

"There was a beautiful city named Baranashi, where a highly respectable Brahman, named Dev Surma, resided. He had two sons, the elder named Karma, and the younger **[260]** Dharma. One day Dev Surma informed his sons that he wished to make over to them his property, and devote the remainder of his life to meditation on a future state, and he accordingly divided between them all that he possessed. In a short time after receiving his share, Karma, by his extravagance, was reduced to such indigence, that he was obliged to resort to begging for his subsistence. One day, the wife of Karma Surma said to her husband, "Oh, my lord ! please go to-day to your brother who is rich and wealthy." Her husband, according to her words, went to his brother's house. On that day Dharma Surma was employed in the field with his laborers in transplanting the rice plants. Karma engaged himself in the work with them. When the sun set and fearful night approached, Dharma, after taking his meal in the field, went home. Karma Surma waited as a servant with the laborers at his door, but his rich brother gave him neither rice nor paddy. Much depressed, he was returning home, when, on his way, he saw some males and females of the village worshipping the Karma tree, by adorning it with flags and flowers, and presenting it with *naivedya* (oblation), incense and other articles. He asked them what was the object of this *vrata*. They told him that it would avert all kinds of misfortune, and that whoever, after fasting, properly performed it, seldom suffered from distress. Hearing this, he returned home, and told all to his wife, who joyfully received this account of the *vrata*, and made a vow to perform it. Accordingly, on the eleventh lunar day of the increasing moon of Bhadra, just at night-fall, Karma Surma and his wife planted the Karma tree and rice plants together in the yard of the house and worshipped it, keeping a lamp burning, and offering sandal, flowers, *naivedya*, and incense, and giving money to the Brahmans. By performing this chief of Vratas, he obtained enormous wealth. Thus, those who with their *wives* perform this ceremony, become rich and happy in this world ; and their sons and grandsons become rich and happy too ; and all ultimately go to the heaven of the Gods !"

My simple Oraons are only intent on obtaining a good harvest, and that is, doubtless, the original motive for the feast. It is noticeable in the above passage, that it does not profess to explain the origin of the ceremony, but shows how a Brahman was first induced to imitate what he had seen the people of the country performing ; and considering how the territory in which the custom most prevails is inhabited, and the deep interest taken in the feast by the non-Aryan tribes, we may infer that the narrative of the *Purana* is to explain how a festival of the aboriginal people was adopted by Hindus. The necessity of the females of the family joining in the ceremony is against its Hindu origin, and all the observances have a geniality about them, and, at the same time, a decorum which are not usually characteristic of Hindu, Puranic, or Tantric rites.

The 'Karma' or Kelikadamba' is the *Nauclea parvifolia*. I do not know what attributes the tree possesses to render it so sacred, but it is singular to find it prominently noticed in botanical works, as a native of the Konkans, from whence the Oraons are said to be derived. One of the *Puranas*, explaining why this tree is to be worshipped, tells us that Krishna delighted in climbing it, and concealing himself in its dense foliage from a Kadamba tree he leaped into the serpents' pool, and subdued the snake king Kaliya.[68]

[261] The Sarhul festival : The Oraons have some observances during the Sarhul festival that differ a little from those of the Mundas. Their idea is that, at this season, the marriage of 'Dharti, the earth, is celebrated, and this cannot be done till the Sal trees give the flowers for the ceremony. It takes place, then, towards the end of March, or beginning of April, but any day whilst the Sal trees are in blossom will answer. On the day fixed, the villagers accompany their Pahn to the Sarna, the sacred grove, a remnant of the old Sal forest in which the Oraons locate a popular deity called the Sarna Burhi, or woman of the grove, corresponding with the 'Jahir Era' and Desauli of the Mundas. To this dryad, who is supposed to have great influence on the rain, (a superstition not unlikely to have been founded on the importance of trees as cloud compellers), the Pahn, arriving with his party at the grove, offers five fowls. These are afterwards cooked with rice, and a small quantity of the food is given to each person present. They then collect a quantity of Sal flowers, and return laden with them to the village. Next day the Pahn, with some of the males of the village, pays a visit to every house, carrying the flowers in a wide open basket. The females of each house take out water to wash his feet as he approaches, and, kneeling before him, make a most respectful obeisance. He then dances with them, and places over the door of the house, and in the hair of the women, some of the Sal flowers. The moment that this is accomplished, they throw the contents of their water vessels over his venerable person, heartily dousing the man whom, a moment before, they were treating with such profound respect. But to prevent his catching cold they ply him with as much of the home brew as he can drink, consequently, his reverence is generally gloriously drunk before he completes his round. The feasting and beer drinking now become general, and after the meal, the youth of both sexes, decked with Sal flowers (they make an exceedingly becoming head-dress), flock to the Akhra, and dance all night and best part of next day.

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[68] *Vishnu Purana*. Wilson's tr., Ch. vii.

Funeral ceremonies : Where a death occurs in an Oraon family it is made known to the village by the loud lamentations of the women, who loosen their hair, a demonstration of grief which appears to prevail in all countries, and cry vigorously. They lay out the body on the common cot, called *charpai*, and after washing it carefully, convey it to the appointed burning place, covered with a new cloth, and escorted by all the villagers, male and female, who are not, for some reason, unable to attend. In some families the funeral procession proceeds with music, but others dislike this custom, and nothing is heard but the cries of the women. Arrived at the place where the funeral pile has been prepared, the body is again washed, and the nearest relations of the deceased make offerings of rice, and put rice into the mouth of the corpse, and some put pice or other coin. The body is then placed on the pile and anointed, and further offerings of rice are made, and the pile is ignited by a father or mother, a wife or a husband. When the body has been consumed, notice is given in the village, and there is another collection of friends and relatives to collect the charred bones which remain. These are placed in a new earthen vessel, and ceremoniously taken to the village, and as the procession returns, parched rice is dropped on the road to mark the route selected. Thec inerary urn is suspended to a post erected in front of the deceased's late residence, the guests are feasted, and the party then breaks up.

[262] In the month of December or January next ensuing, the friends and relations are all again collected to witness the disposal of the bones, in the place that, from the first establishment of the community, has been appropriated to the purpose. This is a point on which the Oraons are exceedingly tenacious, and even when one of them dies far from his home, his relations will, if possible, sooner or later, recover the fragments of his bones, and bear them back to the village, to be deposited with the ashes of his ancestors. The burial ground is always near a river, stream, or tank. As the procession proceeds with music to this place, offerings of rice are continually thrown over the cinerary urn till it is deposited in the grave prepared for it, and a large, flat stone placed over it. Then all must bathe, and after paying the musicians, the party returns to the village. The money that was placed in the mouth of the corpse, and afterwards saved from the ashes, is the fee of the musicians. The person who carried the bones to the grave has to undergo purification by incense, and the sprinkling of water. It is to be observed that this ceremony occurs in each village but once in the year, and on the appointed day the ashes of all who have died during the year are simultaneously relegated to their final resting place. No marriage can take place in a village whilst the bones of the dead are retained there. The most ardent lovers must patiently await the day of sepulture[69]. The marriage season commences shortly after it.

Conclusion : The Oraons, if not the most virtuous, are about the most cheerful of the human race. Their lot is not a particularly happy one. Not one of their own people now occupies a position which would give him the power to protect, or influence to elevate them from the state of degradation into which a majority of the tribe have long ago fallen. They submit to be told that they were especially created as a laboring class. They have had this so often dinned into their ears, that they believe and admit it ; and I have known instances of their abstaining from claiming, as authorised by law, commutation for the forced labor exacted by their landlords, because they considered that they were born to it. There are indeed some amongst them, stern yeomen, who cling with tenacity to the freeholds they have inherited, and will spend all they possess, even their life's blood (and peradventure shed blood) in defending them, but the bulk of the people seldom rise in their own country, above the position of cottiers and laborers. There the value of labor has not risen in proportion to the advance that has taken place in other parts of India, and Oraons are easily induced to migrate for a time to other climes, even to regions beyond the great 'black water', where their work is better remunerated. But those who return with wealth thus accumulated, regard it not. They spend in a month what would have made them comfortable for life, and relapse into their lot of labor and penury, as if they had never had experience of independence and plenty. I believe they relish work, if the task-master be not over-exacting. Oraons sentenced to imprisonment without labor, as sometimes happens, for offences against the excise laws, insist on joining the laboring gangs, and whenever employed, if kindly treated, they labor as if they felt an interest in the work. In cold weather or hot, rain or sun, they go cheerfully about it, and after some nine or ten hours of toil, (seasoned with a little play and chaff amongst themselves), they return blithely home, in flower decked groups, [263] holding each other by the hand or round the waist, and singing. When I first saw them, this struck me as a very noteworthy characteristic ; for, as a rule, the working classes of all countries, especially in India, move unsociably in Indian file. It is only people of fine organization, and gentle nurture, and the aborigines of Chutia Nagpur, who voluntarily walk abreast and linked together in line. The Oraons have acquired this habit from their naturally genial dispositions, and their dancing drills and parades.

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[69] Which is called 'Hadbari'.

SECTION—2

THE MALERS—PAHARIAS OR HILLMEN OF RAJMAHAL

Geographical extent : The Rajmahal hill country extends from the banks of the Ganges at Segrigalli, in Latitude 25° 15′ north, and Longitude 87° 3′ east, to the Brahmani river, and the boundary of the Birbhum district, a distance of seventy miles. To the south of the Brahmani the hills continue to the river Dwarka as the Ramgarh hills of the Birbhum district.

It has been often asserted that the Rajmahal hills are a continuation of, and that they form the northern and eastern limit of, the Vindhyan range ; but this has not been confirmed by more recent and detailed examination, for particulars of which I am indebted to Mr. V. Ball, of the Geological Survey of India.

Mr Ball. observes that "physically, both the Rajmahal and Ramgarh hills may be regarded as forming an isolated group, the north-eastern extremity of which constitutes the turning point of the Ganges.

Physically, these hills are quite detached from the Vindhyan range.

Geologically, there is nothing in common between them. The Vindhyan being composed of quartzite sandstone, limestones, and shales of great age, and the Rajmahal hills of overflowing basaltic trap of comparatively recent age, which rests upon coal measures, and metamorphic (gneissose) rocks."

The measures taken to separate the Rajmahal hills from the circumadjacent country with the view of terminating the disputes and collisions which were constantly occurring between the proprietors of estates in the plains and the hillmen or Paharias, have already been detailed in my account of the Santals. By this measure, which was carried out in A.D. 1832, the chief proprietary right in this interesting country has centred in the Government, and the authorities were empowered to deal with the claims on the soil, preferred by the hill people, in an equitable and liberal spirit.

The Daman-i-koh : Round the skirts of the hills a cordon was drawn embracing a tract called, from that circumstance, the Daman-i-koh ; and on the hills within this line reside the Malers, or Malairs, who may be allowed to designate themselves as the *asal*, or true, Paharias. The skirts and valleys of the Daman are occupied by Santals, whose settlement in this part of the country is comparatively recent. So long as the new colonists confine themselves to the Lowlands, the Paharias, from their lofty eyries, look down on their rapidly increasing cultivation with indifference, but the slightest attempt on the part of the Santals to encroach on the hills, arouses their jealousy, and ensures the expulsion of the intruder. Sometimes, indeed, they watch, with chuckling complacency, the labors of a Santal, who, presuming that silence means consent, has been beguiled into clearing for a short distance the slopes of the hills, but the moment he commences **[264]** to cultivate, he finds from very significant threats that he must withdraw, and leave the hillmen to profit by his toil.

Dr. Buchanan estimated the Malers at 35,340 souls ; but the Sajawal, or Native Superintendent, told him that there were, in all, 80,000 houses, which would give a population of not less than 400,000.

The Rajmahalis describe themselves as divided into clans, but from all the information I have been able to procure on this subject, I am inclined to define the divisions as sectarian rather than tribal, arising from some having been indoctrinated with Hindu notions of purity in the matter of food, whilst others retain their liberty of conscience and appetite.

The Malers call themselves the Asal Paharias, because they have not subjected themselves to any restrictions in regard to what they eat. The people of the southern, or Ramgarh hills, called Mal, have another division called Kumhars, who abstain from cow's flesh, from flesh of animals which die a natural death, and will not partake of food that has not been cooked by themselves ; repudiate all notions of consanguinity with the impure feeding Northerners, to whom they apply the term *Chit*, which is probably the reverse of complimentary. I have no doubt that they have, besides the above, the usual family or tribal distinctions, but they have not been noticed.

The Malas of the *Purana* topographical lists have been variously placed by commentators. Professor Wilson referring to the position assigned to the Mala of Kalidasa's poem, the *Meghaduta*, places it in Chattisgarh ; Colonel Wilford assigns as the position of the country or people Malabhum in Midnapore. We have no reason for supposing that the Rajmahal Malers came from that eastern district, but with reference to the Oraon tradition of the western origin of the tribe, we might assume that the Malavas of the *Vishnu Purana*, supposed to be the people of Malwa, the country to the north of the Vindhyan range, between Bundelkhand and Gujrat, were the prototypes of our Rajmahal Paharias. We have a tribe called Mal or Mar, scattered over Sirguja, Palamau, Belounja, &c., who are now a thoroughly Hinduised people, and resemble Hindus in appearance. *They* declare, they came originally from Malwa ; it is said by them, and of them, that they at one time formed the bulk of the population in Palamau, but there are very few there now. Malwa is the chief seat of the Bhil race, who are considered aborigines of that district. Malavas and Bhils may be identical, and our Paharias and Bhils cognates.

Although the Malers were the first of the aboriginal tribes of Bengal that were prominently noticed by the officers of the East India Company, our information regarding their customs and ethnic peculiarities are derived almost entirely from a monograph by Lieutenant T. Shaw, published in 1795 A.D. in vol. IV of the *Asiatic Researches*. The accurate investigator and topographer, Dr. Buchanan, refers us to that paper, instead of giving us his own observation ; and another more modern enquirer, the late Colonel Walter Sherwill, who surveyed the hills, acknowledges that, for most of the information regarding the customs and religion of the tribe given by him, he is indebted to Lieutenant Shaw.

I have never had an opportunity of personal intercourse with them, and am, therefore, entirely dependent on the writers above mentioned, and some manuscript notes which have been kindly drawn up at my request by Mr. William Atkinson of Rajmahal.

[265] Traditions of origin : From all I can learn the Malers have no traditions throwing any real light on their history. They do not endorse the story of their common origin with the Oraons and migration with them from the west, preserved by the latter people ; on the contrary, they aver that the human race was first produced on the hills to which they cling. This is their tradition, as related by Lieutenant Shaw :—

"Seven brothers were sent from Heaven to people the earth, the eldest fell sick whilst the remainder were preparing a great feast. It was arranged that each was to take of the food that he preferred and go to the place he had chosen to live in. One took goat's flesh and went to a distant country, and his progeny are Hindus ; another, from whom the Musalmans are descended, took flesh of all kinds, except pork. It is not stated what the third took, but he originated the Kharwars. The fourth took hog's flesh, went north, and from him sprang the Kiratis ; a fifth became the ancestor of the Kawdir (? Koda, Kora, Kola, tank-digging Kols). The sixth took food of all kinds and went far away, and it was not known what had become of him till the English appeared, when it was at once concluded that they were the descendants of the omnivorous brother. The seventh brother was named Malair ; he was the eldest who was sick ; they gave him all kinds of food in an old dish, thus he became an outcast, and was left in the hills, where, finding neither clothes nor means of subsistence, he and his people necessarily became thieves, and continued in that vocation till taught better by Mr. Cleveland !"

This wild legend is only useful as indicating the people with whom the Malers have successively come into contact. They recognise, and attempt to account for, the existence of Kiratis, Kharwars, Kols, Hindus, Muhammadans, and the English, but apparently none of their own cognates were known to them. The story gives us no clue to migrations, but the Oraon tradition brings the whole nation gradually from the Western Ghats to Rohtas, where it is said they were established for a long period, till attacked and driven out by Aryans. They divided into two parties, one selecting the Rajmahal hills, the other, the highlands of *Jharkhand* or Chutia Nagpur, as their place of refuge. They assign to this flight from Rohtas a comparatively recent period, making out that their conquerors were Muhammadans, but this is inconsistent with the more reliable accounts we have of the long sojourn of the Oraons in Chutia Nagpur.

Before they had been weaned from lawless pursuits by the judicious treatment of Mr. Cleveland and other British Officers, the Paharias appear to have been left to their own notions of Government, and though, according to Lieutenant Shaw, they possessed a code of ethics of singularly elevated tone, their practices are represented as utterly savage and cruel. We are told that if a man of one village had a claim on a person subject to a different Manjhi, and settlement was evaded, he made application to his own chief, who assembled his vassals and seized the offender after plundering the village in which he resided. The plunder was appropriated by the chief and his followers. The accused was detained until his relations paid what had been originally claimed with costs ; the costs including full compensation to the persons who in the raid on the village had been pillaged.

Under the Muhammadan Government, the inhabitants of the Rajmahal hills were the terror of the surrounding country ; but they were encouraged in predatory habits by the zamindars at the foot of the hills, who invited the chiefs to plunder neighbouring estates, giving them a passage through their territory for the purpose, on condition of [266] getting the lion's share of the spoil. Thus tempted and encouraged, they grew (as they themselves admit) to live on plunder, and not only were the roads near the hills unsafe, but boats on the Ganges hugged the northern bank of the river to avoid them. Under the British Government a corps of Light Infantry was specially organised to keep these mountaineers in order, the two successive commandants of which were the first to impress the hillmen with a new sense of their obligations to the rulers of the country and to pave the way for their submission to Mr. Augustus Cleveland,[70] who to this day is revered by them as their great benefactor and reclaimer.

Mr. Cleveland's plan appears to have been to preserve, as far as possible, their system of self-government, and to utilize the rude administrative machinery that he found in existence. On condition of their becoming responsible for the good behaviour of their adherents, the chiefs were salaried according to their rank. The head of a 'Tappah' [71] received ten rupees a month, his deputy three rupees, and the Manjhi, or head, of each village two rupees.

Further to secure their co-operation, Mr. Cleveland formed from their young men a regiment of archers, 1,000 strong ; and within two years from their first formation, they had so gained his confidence, that he gave them fire-arms, and they became the Bhagalpur hill-rangers; which were in existence till disbanded on the reorganization of the Native Army after the mutiny in 1857.

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[70] Collector of Bhagalpur, died A.D. 1784.

[71] A local division comprising several villages.

Origin of the Non-Regulation system : The difficulties experienced by the Government of the East India Company in dealing with the Rajmahal hillmen, and the exceptional measures they found it necessary to resort to, first opened their eyes to the fact that their laws, however wise, were not applicable to all their subjects. Thus originated the *Non-Regulation system*. We have this enunciated in the preamble to Regulation 1 of 1796, which is worth quoting for the brief and reliable account it gives of the condition of the tribe.

Preamble to Reg. 1 of 1796 : "The hills situated to the south and west of Rajmahal, and other parts of the district of Bhagalpur, are inhabited by a distinct race of people, entirely differing in manners, customs, and religion, from the inhabitants of the circumjacent country, and who, as far as can be traced, never acknowledged the authority of the Native Government."

"Being destitute of manufactures, and but little acquainted with agriculture, they subsisted principally by plunder ; and their incursions into the low country, which were attended by every species of cruelty, had almost desolated the districts to which they had extended."

In consideration of their uncivilized state, and entire ignorance of the language,[72] laws and customs of the Hindus and Muhammadans, it was determined, on the 14th of June 1782, that the inhabitants of the hills should not be subject to the ordinary tribunals ; but that all crimes and misdemeanours should be tried by an assembly of their chiefs, under the superintendence of the Magistrate, who was ordered, in particular cases, to report the sentence passed by the assembly for the revision of the Governor-General in Council.

[267] Regulation 1 of 1827 : The Regulation provided that the Magistrate should commit all important cases to be tried before an assembly of hill chiefs. He was to attend the trial as Superintending Officer, and confirm or modify the sentence, if not exceeding fourteen years' imprisonment. Higher sentences were referred to the Nizamat Adawlat, as the Supreme Criminal Court was then called. This unusual Procedure was followed till 1827, when the law was repealed by Regulation 1 of that year ; the mountaineers were then declared amenable to the ordinary courts, but some of the hill Manjhis were to sit with the Magistrate as Assessors, when he tried cases in which the hillmen were concerned, and he was also authorised to adjudicate summarily in disputes about land, succession, and claims to money, when the value of the suit did not exceed one hundred rupees. These were most salutary provisions, as there is nothing so unsatisfactory and bewildering to an unsophisticated hillman, as to be bandied about from one court to another in search of a Judge with the jurisdiction that suits his case.

Although the accounts hitherto published do not show as much similitude between the social customs of the Oraons and Rajmahalis as the Oraon legend of their consanguinity and the similarity of their language might lead us to expect, I believe that if one who was familiar with the Oraon peculiarities were to visit the Rajmahalis, he would find that where they differed, it was owing to the influence on each of the foreigners they had during a long separation severally come in contact with, and a close analysis would prove that where Oraons and Mundas most differ, the former are generally in accord with the Rajmahalis, and when the Rajmahalis are at variance with the Oraons, it is owing to the former having been indoctrinated by Hindus.

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[72] In Mr. Cleveland's time.

Religion. Metempsychosis : We learn from Lieutenant Shaw's paper, that the Paharias have a firm belief in the transmigration of souls. Their high-toned moral code is, in respect to rewards and punishments after death, entirely based on that doctrine which, with the code, was, it is said, revealed to their first parents by the Creator. It will be sufficiently understood by a perusal of the following little homily[73].

Pahari ethics : Whoever obeys God's commandments will behave well in all respects. He will neither injure, abuse, beat, nor kill any one ; nor rob, nor steal, nor waste food or clothes, nor quarrel ; but he will praise God morning and evening ; and the *women must do this too.* When a good man has lived this life as long as God pleases, God sends for him and says, "you have behaved well, and have kept my commandments, and I will exalt you, but for a season you must remain with me." The object of this sojourn is not stated, but when it is completed, the spirit of the good man is remitted to earth, to be born again of a woman as a Raja or Chief, or in some higher position than that he previously held. If he show himself unmindful or ungrateful in his exaltation, his days are cut short, and he is born again as an inferior animal.

Retribution : The abuse of riches or other good gifts is often punished in this world. The riches disappear, or calamity befalls the offender. Concealment of crime, as murder, or adultery, is looked on as a great aggravation of the offence. It becomes still more heinous, if **[268]** the object of the concealment is to throw blame on another. God sees all that is done, and though mortals may be deceived, and punishment fall on the innocent, the really guilty is sure in the end to suffer a greater calamity than he inflicts. Suicide is a crime in God's eyes, and the soul of one who so offends shall not be admitted into heaven, but must hover eternally as a ghost between heaven and earth, and a like fate awaits the soul of the murderer.

The above is a brief abstract of the Pahari doctrines and ethics communicated to Lieutenant Shaw by an intelligent mountaineer, a Subadar of the hill-rangers, who had been a protege of Mr. Cleveland's and had received some education from him. I suspect the Subadar was himself the 'Menu' of his tribe, and that many of his precepts were inspired by his patron. The notices given of the minor deities that the Paharis revere, and of the propitiatory rites practised, are more in accordance with the ordinary customs and notions of the aboriginal tribes, than the passages above quoted.

Divinities : The Malers call God Bedo, and the title affixed to the name of all their deities is Gosai or Gosain, a corruption, apparently, of the Sanskrit Goswami. The word Nad is sometimes used. The minor deities are as follows :—

1st.—Raxie. When a man-eating tiger infests a village, or a bad epidemic breaks out, Raxie has to be sought, and with the aid of the priest or diviner, a black stone, which represents the God, is found and set up under a large tree, and hedged round by plants of the 'Sij', *Euphorbia.*

2nd.—Chal or Chalnad is similarly sought when any calamity befalls a village, and he also is found as a black stone and set up under a Mukmum tree. In his house the Chitarin festival is held every three years, at which a cow is sacrificed.

3rd.—Pow Gosain, the God of highways, invoked by all persons going on a journey. His altar is under a Bel tree, *Œgle marmelos*, and the offering is a cock. One such sacrifice may serve many journeys. It is not repeated unless the votary meets with an accident.

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[73] *Asiatic Researches*, vol. IV., page 48.

4th.—The tutelary deity of each village community is called Dwara Gosain. This may be the same as the Oraon *Dara* or *Darha*. Whenever, from some calamity falling on the household, it is considered necessary to propitiate this deity, the head of the family clears a place in front of his house, and sets up a branch of the tree called Mukmum, which appears to be held very sacred, like the 'Karm' in Chutia Nagpur ; an egg is placed near the branch, then a hog is killed, and friends feasted ; and when the ceremony is over, the egg is broken and the branch placed over the suppliant's house.

5th.—Kul Gosain, the Ceres of the mountaineers[74], is annually worshipped, when the sowing season approaches, with the sacrifice of a wether goat or hog by those who can afford it, or of a fowl by persons in indigent circumstances. The offering is made by the head of each family under a tree near which the Mukmum branch is set up, but the village priest assists, and drink some of the blood of the victim or pretends to do so ; a fore-quarter of the animal killed is presented to this Manjhi.

[269] 6th.—The god of hunting is called Autga, and at the close of every successful expedition a thank offering is made to him. This is the favorite pastime, and one of the chief occupations of the Malers, and they have their game laws which are strictly enforced.

Game Laws : - If a man losing an animal he has killed or wounded seeks for assistance to find it, those who aid are entitled to one-half of the animal when found. Another person accidentally coming on dead or wounded game and appropriating it, is subjected to a severe fine. The Manjhi, or head of the village, is entitled to a share of all game killed by any of his people. Any one killing a hunting dog is fined twelve rupees ; certain parts of an animal are tabooed to females as food. If they infringe this law, Autga is offended and game becomes scarce. When the hunters are unsuccessful, it is often assumed that this is the cause, and the augur never fails to point out the transgressing female who must provide a propitiatory offering. The Malers use poisoned arrows, and when they kill game, the flesh round the wound is cut off and thrown away as unfit for food. Cats are under the protection of the game laws, and a person found guilty of killing one is made to give a small quantity of salt to every child in the village.

7th.—Gumu Gosain is sometimes associated with Kul, but he is specially invoked as a deity of no small influence, and a person desirous of propitiating him must abstain from all food prepared in his own house, and must not partake of the meat offered in the sacrifice ; the obligation of abstinence extends to five days after the ceremony.

The last of the gods on Lieutenant Shaw's list is

8th.—Chamda Gosain, evidently one of the most important, as it requires so extensive an offering to appease him, that only chiefs and men of wealth can afford to make the attempt. The supplicants have to ascertain from the priests or augurs what they have to provide and act implicitly according to their orders. They may have to supply one dozen of hogs, as many goats, with rice and oil in proportion, and a quantity of red lead. Three bamboos are procured and a number of strips of bark prepared and attached to the bamboos as tricolored streamers, the ends being painted black and red and the centre left the natural color. To one of the bamboos ninety of these streamers are attached, to another sixty, to the third twenty, and the poles are further decorated with peacock's feathers ; they are then set up as the Chamda Gosain in front of the house of the person who organises the sacrifice, and offerings are made to them. After feasting, the guests spend the night in dancing, three of them, relieved at intervals, supporting the bamboo effigies of Chamda. In the morning special sacrifices are offered in the house of the master of the ceremony and in his fields for a blessing on what is produced in each, progeny and crops. The *Mukmum* branch sprinkled with blood marks the spot where the altars have been raised. At the close of the ceremony, the bamboos are taken inside and suspended from the roof of the votary's house in token of his having performed the full sacrifices required of him.

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[74] Shaw, *Asiatic Res.*, Vol. IV, page 62.

[270] **Priests** : According to Buchanan the Malers had formerly priests called Naiyas or Laiyas, but these men do not now exercise priestly functions, which have d volved on the Demanos who were previously only diviners, and the office was separate from that of the priesthood. The Demanos are elected by inspiration like the Pope, and after their call they spend a certain number of days in the wilderness in (as they make their flock believe) intimate communication with Bedo Gosain. From the time that any one devotes himself to the profession of priest and augur, his hair is allowed to grow like a Nazarite ; his powers of divination entirely disappear if he cuts it. Before he is admitted to full orders, his ability to foretell events correctly must be verified, and he must prove by the performance of some stupendous work beyond the strength of one man, that he is supernaturally aided by the supreme being. The priest may be a married man, but after entering into holy orders he must refrain from associating with or touching any woman except his wife. Having undergone all the tests, his nomination is finally confirmed by the Manjhi of the village, who ties a red silk thread to which *cowries* are attached round his neck, and binds a turban on his head. He is then allowed to appear at the periodical sacrifice of buffaloes celebrated by the Manjhi in the month of January, and must drink some of the blood of the victim.

At this festival a branch of the Mukmum tree is planted in front of the Manjhi's house, and under its shade the great man sits on a chair or stool which is reserved for such ceremonies. Taking rice from the priest he scatters it about, and all who are supposed to be possessed with devils scramble for it. The demoniacs are then bound till a buffalo is slaughtered, when they are released, in order that they may taste of the blood which cures them ! The skulls of the animals killed on these occasions are preserved on stages erected in front of the Manjhi's house, on which are also deposited trophies of the chase, heads of spotted deer, wild hog, porcupine, *nilgai*, barking deer, hare, etc.

The heads of animals sacrificed on other occasions are the prerequisites of the priests, the remainder is eaten by males only who are invited to the feast. Women are not permitted to touch the sacrificial meat or the flesh of any animal that has not been killed in a particular way, by a blow on the side !

Divination : There are two processes of divination ; Lieutenant Shaw calls one Satani, the other Cherin. The former is a test by blood sprinkled on Bel leaves. In the latter the knowledge is obtained by watching the direction of the oscillations of a pendulum.

As so many years have elapsed since Lieutenant Shaw drew up his account of the

Paharias, we might expect at the present time to find many and important changes in their customs, but the following precis of notes on the tribe with which I have been kindly favored by Mr. W. Atkinson of Rajmahal shows that they are very conservative in their sociology.

The Paharias are divided into three tribes, the Malers, the Mal, and the Kumar; the first retain more of the habits of their ancestors than the other two, and are rather proud of their unbounded liberty in the matter of food. They say, they eat anything that Christians eat, and a little more, for they turn not away from the carcasses of animals which have died a natural death.

They have priests, Daimonos (Demanos), and priestesses, Khiendri, who when officiating become wildly excited as if demoniacally affected. The priest rolls on the [271] ground in his phrenzy, but the priestess must maintain an erect position. The Paharias all adore the sun as Bedo or Bero Gosain. They have no special seasons for worshipping him, but when offerings are made to the minor deities, prayers are addressed also to the great God Bedo. This is quite in unison with the Oraon theology.

They have material representations of all their gods. They make wooden images which are honored for a season as idols, but they are renewed every year, and the old ones are discarded and thrown away as rubbish, when the festival for which they are made is over. This may be derived from the Hindu custom at the Durga and other festivals, but if properly analysed it might be found to be identical with the Oraon practice of breaking up and throwing away with rubbish the altars of earth they construct for invocation purposes when they have no longer use for them.

Colonel Sherwill in his paper on the Rajmahal hills[75] gives a sketch of some Pahari idols called elephant gods, which are probably of a more permanent character. They have a very fetish appearance. In each village a shed is put up for the tutelary Gosain in which stones are placed to represent him and his attendants. This practice is found to prevail in most Hindu villages, and was in all probability derived from the aborigines. The single stone that is seen in some may be the origin of the *ling* worship. The minor deities now invoked by the Paharias for good harvests are Chal, Singpat, and Raxi[76]. The priests are still under the obligation to drink some of the blood of the animals sacrificed, but the priestesses are exempted from this part of the ceremony.

The Paharias appear to be singularly timid or shy and averse to strangers. This has been noticed by every European who has visited them ; and Mr. Atkinson tells me that they have not to this day got over their diffidence and reserve, but apparently they are rarely visited by officers, and I have observed equal timidity and seeming inhospitality in Oraon villages when first visited ; but with frequent intercourse the feeling wears off and they become very sociable.

The Paharias have great reverence for the noble forest trees of their native hills, and from Colonel Sherwill's descriptions it [77] appears that their principal villages are built on sites which are richly adorned by them. The village of Simuria is described as buried in a fine forest of magnificient *Nauclea* and *Noaria*, and the old chief pointed out with sorrow the denuded appearance of an adjacent hill, all the old timber on which had been felled by some Missionary who had made preparations for building there but had abandoned the design.

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[75] See *Journal, Asiatic Society, Bengal,* for 1851, page 552.

[76] Singpat is apparently new.

[77] Sherwill, *Journal, Asiatic Society, Bengal,* 1851, page 586.

Villages : The villages are described as having rather a civilized appearance. Gaupara, one of the largest, containing eighty houses, with four hundred inhabitants, is built on the summit of a high range of hills. It is surrounded by gardens enclosed with neat hurdle fences containing vegetables, mustard, tobacco, plantains, date, and other palms ; and in the centre of the villages and shading the houses are luxuriantly growing tamarind, pipal, mango, and jack trees, clumps of bamboos, palms, and plantains. The houses are built with care, all of wattled bamboo, no mud whatever being used in their construction, and numerous out-houses, [272] pig-sties and well-stored granaries bespeak plenty and comfort. A long bamboo is fixed in the ground in front of each house to ward off evil spirits.

Besides the dwelling houses, there are a number of well thatched round and rectangular granaries supported on posts in which the harvest of Indian corn and millet is carefully stowed away. The *machans* often give a peculiarly Malayan aspect to the villages. The Rajmahalis do not as a rule use rice ; they aver that it does not agree with them.

Colonel Sherwill noticed in the thickest part of the jungle on the hills several places where mystic ceremonies had been performed. These were marked by two upright posts supporting a beam from which depended old baskets, calibashes, earthen pots, old wooden mortars, winnowing fans, and other articles of domestic use ; at other places the collections were of old arms ; and at a short distance from the posts small earthen vessels were observed full of blood and spirits. We are not told the object of this curious collection, but the first is no doubt the Rajmahali version of the Oraon ceremony called the *rog-pelowa*, expulsion of an evil spirit that has been afflicting the village with disease amongst cattle or men.

Dances : I nowhere find any description of the dances or of the songs of the Paharias. Mr. Atkinson found the Malers exceedingly reticent on the subject, and with difficulty elicited that they had a dancing place in every village, but it is only when under the influence of God Bacchus that they indulge in the amusement.

Their national drink : All accounts agree in ascribing to the Paharias an immoderate devotion to strong drink, and Buchanan[78] tells us that when they are dancing, a person goes round with a pitcher of the home brew and without disarranging the performers who are probably linked together by circling or entwining arms pours into mouth of each, male and females a refreshing and invigorating draught. Buchanan considers the origin of this custom to be the feeling that in no other way would they drink fair. The beverage is the universal *pachwai*, that is fermented grain. The grain, either maize, rice or *janera* (*Holcus sorghum*) is boiled and spread out on a mat to cool. It is then mixed with a ferment of vegetables called *bakar* and kept in a large earthen vessel for some days ; warm water may at any time be mixed with it, and in a few hours it ferments and is ready for use.

Bachelors' clubs : I have been informed by the Revd. Mr. Droese, Missionary at

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[78] Buchanan, Topography of Bhagalpur, page 125.

Bhagalpur, that the Oraon custom of excluding the unmarried adults of both sexes from the family residence is followed by the Paharias, and that the Bachelors' hall and maidens' dormitories are institutions of the Rajmahal hills as well as of the Chutia Nagpur highlands (See section on Oraons, page [248].

Costume and physical traits : Buchanan says that the Malers are fully as well dressed and as cleanly in their persons as the ordinary peasantry of the plains, and their women possess more valuable ornaments than the lowland females of the cultivating class.

The Maler is represented as short of stature and slight of make. He is particular about his hair which he wears well oiled and combed in a knot on the top of his head.

[273] The features are of a mild Tamulian type. The nose indeed is not prominent, but it is broad below, having circular rather than elliptical nares ; their faces are rather oval than lozenge shaped ; their lips are, as a rule, full, but their mouths and chins are pretty well formed, and the facial angle is good [79] ; their eyes are of the Aryan or Circassian form, not buried in fat and obliquely set like Chinese, but full and straight in the head. This would answer very well for a a description of the better looking Oraons, especially where there is a reason for suspecting some slight intermixture of blood, and it is said that the Paharias were in former days much given to the capture of wives from the plains, but with or without such admixture the Dravidian eye is always, I think, more Circassian than Mongolian.

Mr. V. Ball, of the Geological Survey, has favored me with the following description of the Asal Paharias. Their mode of dressing the hair is peculiar ; most of it is collected in a knot behind the head, but two long locks are generally left free and hang over the ears. The men have an erect carriage and generally active figure ; there is nothing singular in their costume, but they are fond of red turbans, and being for the most part well to do are able to gratify their fancy.

The women are often endowed with good figures and sometimes pretty faces. Their dress is extremely graceful and effective. It consists of an ordinary white skirt, with a square of gay colored striped, or banded, *tusser* silk, one end of which is passed over the right and under the left shoulder, and the opposite corners tied ; the other end is tucked in under the skirt at the waist. Red coral necklaces are worn in great profusion, but metal ornaments, such as the Santals delight in, are scarcely used at all.

Love : The Hill lads and lasses are represented as forming very romantic attachments exhibiting the spectacle of real lovers "sighing like furnaces", and the cockney expression of "keeping company" is peculiary applicable to their courtship. If separated only for an hour, they are miserable, but there are apparently few obstacles to their enjoyment of each other's society, as they work together, go to market together, eat together, and sleep together ! But if it be found that they have overstepped the prescribed limits of billing and cooing, the elders declare them to be out of the pale, and the blood of animals must be shed at their expense to wash away the indiscretion and obtain their re-admission into society.

Marriage ceremony : On the day fixed for a marriage, the bridegroom with his relations proceeds to the bride's father's house, where they are seated on cots and mats,[80] and after a repast the bride's father takes his daughter's hand and places it in that of the bridegroom, and exhorts him to be loving and kind to the girl that he thus makes over to him. The groom then with the little finger of his right hand marks the girl on the forehead with *sindur*, vermilion, and then linking the same finger with the little finger of her right hand he leads her away to his own house.

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[79] Buchanan, Topography of Bhagalpur, p. 123. [80] Vide *Asiatic Researches*, Vol. IV, page 70.

Polygamy : Polygamy is allowed and practised, and if a man dies leaving several widows, they can become the wives of his brothers or cousins, but only one to each. In regard to tribal or other restrictions on marriage, I find no information except that a man may not marry a near relation.

[274] Burial ceremonies : The Paharias bury their dead, unless it be a priest's body that they have to dispose of. In that case it is carried on a cot into the forest and placed under the shade of a tree, where it is covered with leaves and branches and left. The reason assigned by them for treating Demanos exceptionally is, that their ghosts are exceedingly troublesome if the bodies are laid in the village cemetery. The bodies of people who die of contagious diseases are similarly disposed of.

In other cases the corpse is taken on its cot to the burial-ground and buried with the cot. When the grave is filled up, stones are put up round and above it. Over the grave of a chief a hut is constructed, which is surrounded by a fence, and for five days after the funeral the retainers and vassals are all feasted. At the end of a year, there is a second season of feasting, and if within that period a man should have lost his wife, he must not marry again, and there can be no division or distribution of the deceased's property till the second feast is given. The eldest son, if there be one, takes half, and the other half is equally divided amongst the agnates. Nephews by sisters get no share.

Veracity : In concluding his report on the mountaineers, Lieutenant Shaw gives them a high character for veracity ; he says they would sooner die than lie.

Mal Paharias : In the Ramgarh Hills of the Birbhum District and at the foot of the Rajmahal hills there are villages and detached houses occupied by a tribe who call themselves Mal Paharias, but who appear to be altogether unconnected with the Rajmahal hillmen. Mr. Ball informs me that these people reminded him of the Kharrias and Paharias met with in Manbhum, who belong to the Kolarian group, but their language does not lead me to infer any very close affinity between them and the Kols. I am indebted to Dr. Coates for a specimen of their language, which I have added to the vocabulary appended to this chapter, though I cannot say I have found in it analogues sufficient to justify its association with the Dravidian dialects, but it is equally unlike Kol. The vocables were obtained from a prisoner in the Hazaribagh Central Jail, who came from Naia Dumka, and he gave also the following account of some customs of his brethren :—In calling themselves Mal, they are of opinion that they declare themselves free from most of the impurities practised by the Rajmahalis, whom, the prisoner says, they call Savaras. They dance like the Kols and are fond of the amusement, and have one great festival in the year in the month of January or Magh, corresponding with the great harvest joy of the Hos and Mundas. It is called 'Bhuindeb,' which is evidently Hindi, the earth god. The Mals plant in their dancing place two branches of the sal tree, and for three days they dance round these branches, after which they are removed and thrown into a river, which reminds one of the Karma festivals as solemnised by the Oraons and Kols in Chutia Nagpur. On this occasion the men and women dance vis-a-vis to each other, the musicians keeping between. The men dance holding each other above their elbows, the left hand of one holding the right elbow of the other, whose right hand again holds the left elbow of the arm that has seized him. The fore-arms touching are held stiffly out and swayed up and down. They move sideways, advance, and retire, sometimes bending low, sometimes erect. The women hold each other by the palms, interlacing the fingers, left palm upon right palm and left and right fore-arms touching. They move like the men. [275] They dance at births (*gālwari*) and at weddings (*behar*), and have a dance called *jhumar* for any time or season. This sounds very like the Santal or Munda name for the same, and may be borrowed from the Santals, their neighbours.

I have no information regarding the religion of this tribe, except that they worship the earth and sun.

SECTION 3

THE GONDS

In most old maps of India, the territorial name Gondwana is printed across the greater portion of the territory now known as the Central Provinces. Gondwana extended from the Vindhyan mountains to the Godavari, and embraced the Satpura range. Of the districts now under the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, it included Korea, Sirguja, and Udaipur, but Gond colonies are found as far east as the Katak Tributary Mahals, where they blend with the Kandhs and the Sauras, or Savaras, and they extend to Khandesh and Malwa in the west, where they touch the Bhils.

Numerical strength : A considerable proportion of the population of this tract—the core of India—are Gonds, and they are by far the most numerous of the aboriginal people still found there. According to the census of 1867, there are a million and a half of Gonds in the Central Provinces, of Bhils 25,454, and of Kurkus or Kols 39,114.

Historical notices : Under what system or form of Government the primitive inhabitants of Gondwana lived, when they were the sole possessors of the country, we have nothing to show. It was no doubt in a rude state, with scanty settlements separated by vast intervals of virgin forest and uninhabited hills, under numerous petty chiefs—sometimes confederates, but oftener at war with each other—till in course of time Aryan sages or warriors penetrated into the fastness, astonishing the savages by their knowledge and prowess : and Brahmanical doctrines, permeating the country, tinged the primitive paganism without obliterating it. The Gond chiefs and all who wished to appear respectable in the eyes of their civilised visitors accepted what they could comprehend of the new faith, but the Brahman policy was ever to leave the hewers of wood and drawers of water in their ignorance, so that whilst the 'upper ten thousand' were gradually Hinduised and partially civilized, the lower classes were left in the unreclaimed state in which we find some of them to this day.

The Hindu subjugators of the Gonds are traditionally styled Rajputs. They formed alliances with the people of the land, especially with the families of the chiefs, and hence sprung up a superior class of Gonds who assumed the title of Rajputs or Raj Gonds, and by them several kingdoms were formed. The most northern of these[81] "had its capital at Mandla and at Garha (near the modern city of Jabalpur) and dominated the greater part of the Narbada valley. Of the two midland kingdoms one had its capital at Deogarh on the southern face or slope of the Satpura range, overlooking and commanding the plains which now belong to Nagpur. Deogarh is now ruined and utterly desolate, but it was a city before Nagpur was even a village. The other midland kingdom had its capital at Kherla, a hill commanding the rich valley of Baitul in the heart of the Satpura range. To this also belonged the celebrated forts of Gavilgarh and Narnala, both in the same hills."

[276] "The southern kingdom had its capital at Chanda on the Wardha, and comprised a vast but wild terriory : it stretched far up to the north-east and again, commanding the Godavari, stretched far down to the south. These four dynasties existed at least some time before the formation of the Mughul Empire. They were brave and independent, but they could never have been rich or powerful."

It is said that the Hindu dynasties first established in Gondwana or Central India lost ground during the sectarian war between Budhists and Brahmans ; [82] the Gond chiefs availed themselves of the opportunity to re-assert their independence, which they apparently maintained till the decline of the Hindu power. Subsequently, though the northern and southern Gond kingdoms succeeded in preserving their autonomy, the remainder were gradually subjugated or made tributary by the Muhammadans. The midland kingdom was thoroughly reduced, and its princes forced or induced to embrace the Muhammadan faith.

Bakht Buland : Bakht Buland, the Gond Raja of Deogarh, was the first to apostatize. He went to Delhi and embraced the Court religion, hoping thus to obtain favour and protection in his contests with his neighbours. He is described by Sir Richard Jenkins as an able administrator. He encouraged the resort to his Court of Hindus and Muhammadans of ability, and it is said that much of the success of the Mahratta Government, subsequently established, was owing to their adoption of the institutions formed by Bakht Buland. His descendants, availing themselves of the assistance of the Mahrattas in their intestine wars, suffered the wily leaders of that restless people to obtain a footing in Gondwana, which in the end led to its subjugation by Raghoji Bhonsla, who died in 1755, A.D. His descendant Madhuji Bhonsla, after the celebrated fight at Sitabaldhi, had to succumb to the British power, and died in exile at Jaudhpur in 1818.

Classification : The above brief sketch will explain how at the present time we find Gonds who have retained their primitive customs and ancient faith ; Gonds who, adopting Hinduism as a more fashionable and civilized religion than their own, hold to its tenets without altogether abandoning their old gods ; Gonds who wear the Brahmanical cord as members of the twice-born class and conform strictly to Hinduism ; and Muhammadan Gonds.

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[81] Administration Report by Sir R. Temple for the year 1862.

[82] Settlement Report of the Bhandara District, by A. J. Lawrence, Esq., B.C.S., p. 56.

In taking the census, it is probable that many of the two latter classes are returned as Hindus or Muhammadans, and that, therefore, the one and a half million is not their full tale in the Central Provinces. If we add the Gonds of Bengal and Madras, we shall certainly have upwards of two millions of souls, perhaps nearly three. My business is chiefly with the Gonds of Bengal, but I find I must make excursions into the Central Provinces to obtain glimpses of the raw material of the race. Of Bengal territory, one half of Sirguja, the whole of Korea, and Udaipur, appear to have been dominated by Gond dynasties. But although they were included in the Gondwana of the old geographers, I am in doubt as to their having been first occupied by Gonds. The chiefs of these estates have for many generations taken up positions in the peerage of India as Rajputs or Kshatriyas, but their claim to the distinction rests on no very firm footing. According to their traditions, they were either specially raised on the spot to rule over the wild countries they are found in, or they came as knightserrant in the Indian [277] days of chivalry, and forced or induced the savages to accept them as rulers. Can it be really true that people, zealous of their independence, thus chose rulers ? I was told in Bamra, one of the dependencies of the Central Provinces, that this had happened there within the last 300 years. The country was originally divided into distinct nationalities, Gonds, Kandhs, and Bhuiyas, each under an independent chief of their own race or tribe, till they chose as their ruler the ancestor of their present Raja, who, being a Hindu and a Rajput, introduced a fourth nationality of his co-religionists, to avoid the indignity of receiving the 'tilak' of investiture from impure hands. We find in all the tributary estates that the tribe, or tribes, who originally predominated, form still under the so-called Kshatriya or Rajput Rajas the landed aristocracy of the country. Thus, in Sirguja, Korea, and Udaipur, the principal subproprietors are Gonds ; in Gangpur, Bonai, Keonjhar, &c., Bhuiyas ; in Chutia Nagpur and many of the Jungle Mahals, Kols. In Bamra, where, as I have said, three nationalities meet, representatives of each tribe are in possession of fiefs. The Gonds joined the Bhuiyas as colonists in Bonai, and we find in the south of that small state two fiefs held on terms of military service by Gonds, whilst the Northern tenures of the same kind are held by Bhuiyas.

In the Singbhum District there are many colonies of Gonds, but they are there styled Dorowas. They are also called Naiks, and are probably brethren of the clan thus noticed in the *Central Provinces Gazetteer*, page 138.—"The Naik or Dhurwe Gonds are found in the south of the district (Chanda), but their numbers are very small. They appear under the Gond kings to have been employed as soldiers, and at the present day to prefer such service to agricultural work. They are divided into seventeen families or houses." The majority of this tribe were formerly settled in Bamanghati, a part of Mayurbhanj. They were the military retainers and clansmen of the Mahapater, who held all Bamanghati in virtue of his office, but after many years of opposition to his feudal Lord, the Raja of Mayurbhanj, he broke out into open insurrection, forced the Government to intefere, and the result was, that he and all his people were banished from Bamanghati and permitted to settle in Singbhum.

All the Gonds above noticed, as located in Bengal, have adopted Hinduism, wholly or partially, and I have not met with one individual in the entire tract who would own to a knowledge of the Gondi language, or who had retained habits and customs characteristic of his race.

The Rautias : There is a powerful tribe,[83] numbering about 15,000, in Chutia Nagpur called Rautia, who are probably of the Gond family ; they were at an early period introduced by the Nagbangsi Raja to aid him against his irrepressible Kol subjects, and they obtained grants of land as military colonists, which their descendants still hold. They resemble the Gonds in feature and in disposition ; but as they aspire to be of Aryan descent, have lost all trace of their original language, and follow the customs of Hindu Sudras, it is impossible to be certain of their affinities.

They made their first appearance in a place called Panari, and though now scattered, they still maintain there a Rautia Pahn, or Baiga, *i.e.*, priest, who performs for the tribe the worship of their tutelary deity called Mahadan, whom I take to be the same as the **[278]** Bura Deo of the Sirguja and Singbhum Gonds, and Bada Deo and Badial Pen of the Southerners.

Tribal divisions : The Gond landed gentry in Korea and Sirguja do not claim to be indigenous. They say that their ancestors came into Sirguja from Mandla and Dangargarh on the disruption of the Gond kingdoms in Central India by the Muhammadans. They all call themselves Raj Gonds ; the following are given as tribes of the smaller fry :—1, Badiya ; 2, Koram ; 3, Paoli ; 4, Murpasi or Murpachi ; 5, Siamb ; 6, Merkand. Amongst the Singbhum Gonds, or Dorowas, I found—1, Bursa ; 2, Naga ; 3, Murpachi ; 4, Merkam ; 5, Kosiamb ; 6, Kariamb ; and 7, Suriam.

The Gonds of the Central Provinces are divided into twelve and a half tribes,[84] *viz.*, Raj Gond, Raghawal, Dadave, Katulya, Padal, Dholi, Ojhyal, Thotyal, Koilabhutal, Koikopal, Kolam, Madyal, and an inferior sort of Padal as the half class. The first four, with the addition according to some of the fifth, are classed as pure Gonds styled 'Koitor', which Mr. Hislop considers to have reference to their love for hills, but other denominations have been given.

The Dholis are so called from their being employed to beat the *dhola*, a drum.[85] The Ojhyal are augurs, from *ojh*. Thotyal means 'maimed', and signifies a low tribe who are employed as bards. The Koilabhutal bring up their daughters as dancing girls and prostitutes. The Koikopal are herdsmen, the word being a Gondi corruption of the Hindi 'Gopal'.

The other tribes are all more or less Hinduised, and to no small extent apparently demoralised in consequence. Amongst the non-reformed aborigines, prostitution and professional dancing and singing are unknown, as is also any division of the tribe or people according to occupation, but in the Kolam and Maria we have apparently the primitive type not found in Bengal, and it is to them we must look for typical peculiarities of the race.

The Kolams : "The Kolams extend all along the Kandi-Konda, or Pindi, Hills on the south of the Wardha River, and along the table-land stretching east and north of Manikgad and thence south to Dautanpali, running parallel to the western bank of the Pranhita."[86] They do not intermarry with other Gonds, and there is considerable difference between their language and what is given to us as ordinary Gondi in Mr. Hislop's vocabulary, but it appears to be pretty closely allied to Telugu. Of their sociology, all that is noticed is, that amongst them the marriage by capture is fashionable. All may be agreed between the parties beforehand, nevertheless the bride must be abducted for the fun of the thing, but the bridegroom has only to overcome the opposition of the young lady's female friends,—it is not etiquette for the men of her village to take any notice of the affair.

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[83] Essay on Gonds, by Revd. S. Hislop, pp. 4 and 6.

[84] *Essay on Gonds*, by Revd. S. Hislop, pp. 6 & 7.

[85] Hislop's paper, p. 10.

[86] Ibid.

The Marias : The Marias appear in Bastar, Chanda, and other southern dependencies as Marias. The name is apparently derived from the Gondi term for a tree, 'Mara', but they are also called Jhorias, from 'jhodi', a brook. This is the name given to the gold-washers in Chutia Nagpur, who are in all probability Gonds likewise. The more civilised Gonds in the southern dependencies are called Marias, Hulbas, and Badiyas.

[279] Their shyness : The Marias are described as an intensely shy people ; so much so that those who are most accustomed to deal with them are not admitted to an interview. The officer who collects their annual rent, approaches a Maria village, beats a drum, and retires. The customary dues are then deposited for him at a spot previously agreed upon and left for him to appropriate.

Appearance : The uncivilized Marias have very little clothing, either for warmth or purposes of decency,[87] and as their bodies are generally begrimed with ashes and dirt, they do not present an attractive appearance.

They shave the head, leaving only a top knot, but as the process is a very painful one, they rarely have recourse to it, and the neglected hair grows in a matted and most untidy form. They wear as many as fifteen small ear-rings in one ear, and round the waist a girdle of *cowries*, or a girdle of ten to fifteen cords, attached to which is a tobacco pouch and a naked knife. A hatchet hanging from the shoulders, or a bow and arrows, completes the costume of a Maria in his native wilds.

Dress : It has been reported that the women of some of the Hill Marias of Bastar are clad only in leaves like the Juangs of Keonjhar, but as I do not find that any leaf-clad tribes have actually been identified as Gond by competent persons, I think it probable that the people alluded to may be a section of the Juangs, who are linguistically and otherwise connected with the Kols. The dress of the Madia, or Maria, Gonds of Bastar described by an observer[88] is for the women a cotton cloth round the waist, which is often the sole garment, but for full dress a wrapper is added. They are tattooed on the face and on the thighs, but the particular marks are not described. They wear small brass ear-rings and a profusion of white bead necklaces, and sometimes an iron loop encircles the neck, on which brass and iron rings are strung to make, I suppose, a pleasing jingle.

The Gadbas : Captain Glasford sought in vain for the leaf-clad Madia ladies ; but he notices a tribe called Gadbas or Gudwas, and gives a specimen of their language, from which it appears that they speak a Kol rather than a Gondi dialect, and dress in cloth made from the fibre of the Kuring tree.

Social peculiarities. Births : A Maria woman, after giving birth to a child, has to remain in retirement for a whole month,[89] and unless she has a daughter old enough to serve her, she must cook for herself the whole time.

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[87] Colonel C. Glasford. Selections from Records 'Government of India,' No. XXXIX, page 39. The Marias and Jhorias in Bastar form, it is said, 45 per cent of the total population.

[88] *Ibid.*, p. 41.

The bachelors are excluded at night from the family residence ; and like the Oraons and other tribes described have a common dormitory, in which they are compelled to sleep.

Betrothals and marriages : Betrothals take place about two years before marriage. The father, making all arrangements for his son, settles with the father of the bride ; but a method of divination is employed to ascertain if the proposed union is likely to prove a happy one. Two grains of rice are separately dropped into water contained in a brass plate ; these are supposed to represent the boy and the girl. If the grains come together, it is auspicious. It forebodes ill, if they separate. Fourteen rupees is the average price of a bride, with the addition of Rs. 2 to her father, [280] to pay for the pig he has to furnish for the feast. A large quantity of liquor has also to be provided. When the payment has been made, the bride-elect makes a round of farewell visits to her friends, and receives from each presents according to their means. In Bastar, when the bridegroom goes with his friends to fetch his bride, the shrinking maiden seeks refuge in a neighbour's house, and hides herself amongst the rafters, from whence, when found, she is ruthlessly dragged down, and borne away to her fate.

In Nagpur the marriage ceremonies of the Gonds resemble those of the Oraons already described.

The tiger-god : In Group VII, section 8, on the Muasis or Kurs, I gave a description of a marriage ceremony performed in the presence and at the expense of Captain W.L. Samuells, of which the hero and heroine were Muasis. Visiting the same neighbourhood in the following year, Captain Samuells found that several couples had postponed their marriages on hearing that he was coming, and were eagerly expecting him, and he selected a pair of Gond lovers to be made happy under his patronage. The ceremony was apparently the same as that observed on the former occasion, and, in truth, I believe that the previous wedding was solemnized rather according to the Gond than the Muasi or Kol rituals ; but in lieu of Ghansam, there was a frightful apparition of two demoniacs, possessed, by a spirit called 'Bagheswar', the tiger-god, who fell ravenously on a bleating kid and gnawed it with their teeth till it expired. The possessed men otherwise conducted themselves in a frantic manner, the wedding guests beholding them in awe-stricken silence, and it was not till the spirit had been duly exorcised that the demoniacs subsided into a tranquil state. This was effected by the father of the bride, who poured down the throat of each, first a liberal allowance of rice-beer, and then a quantity of *ghee* (clarified butter), which apparently lubricated a passage for the demons' departure, and they were left in peace. Captain Samuells writes :—"The manner in which the two men seized the kid with their teeth and by that means killed it, was a sight which could only be equalled on a feeding day in a Zoological Garden or Menagerie."

This tiger-god is held in awe by numerous tribes who dwell in the vicinity of that animal's haunts, but the apparition on the present occasion was of a spirit specially attached to and connected with certain tribes of Gonds occupying the hill country between Sirguja and Rewa. The master of the feast was of one of these tribes ; it was in his family ages ago that the tiger-spirit was born, and for some years so faithfully served his father in the flesh, that the latter was inconsolable when the creature died ; but it was subsequently found that whenever a marriage took place, the spirit, like an Irish Banshi, re-appeared and conducted himself in the violent manner described.

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[89] Reverend S. Hislop, p. 9.

Religion : It appears from the interesting[90] notes left by the late Reverend L. Hislop, that the wild Gonds of Chhindwara and other places are distributed into sects known by the number of gods they each pay devotion to. Some are worshippers of two, some of three, some of more, up to seven gods, and there are restrictions on the intermarriage of different classes of worshippers, which, however, are not very clearly defined.

The names of the gods are different in different places, a five-god worshipper of Chhindwara gave them as—1, Pharsi Pen, or Dula Deva ; 2, Nurma ; 3, Gangara ; 4, Rayetal ; 5, Badiatal. Here Dula Deo has the first place and is made one with Pharsi, **[281]** a warlike deity, but he is reverenced as a household god throughout a very extensive area. He is the chief object of worship to the Boyars of Sirguja, Rewa, and other places ; and I was told in Jashpur that his worship there had become so popular, or was deemed so essential, that every family of every caste or tribe, even Brahmans, had altars dedicated to him in their houses. Gangara is sometimes called Budha, and placed at the head of the list. This was probably in the days of Budhist ascendancy. Each divinity has his particular symbol ; Dula Deo or Pharsi, a battle-axe fastened to a tree ; Nurma, a round piece of wood ; Gangara, four links of an iron chain ; Rayetal and Badiatal, a rude image of a tiger in iron ; but round stones may be set up as the representative of any or all the gods, the number of stones indicating the number of gods worshipped. This is common to all tribes of the Dravidian group ; and we frequently see, in villages where there are Gonds, two curved posts, one much shorter than the other which are said to represent the tutelary deities, male and female, of the locality. The name Salei, Mal, Palo, Chawar, and Kham, or Kank, are also given, but we have no information regarding their different attributes.

The Gonds are, however, found to have one common object of worship, called according to the linguistic peculiarities of the locality, Bura Deo, Bada Deo, or Badial Pen. Pen and Deo mean the same, but the signification of Bura or Bada I am not sure of. Major Macpherson tells us that Bura Pen, the Kandh god, means 'the god of light.' Mr. Hislop no doubt rightly conjectures that Badial Pen, whom he also calls Badhal Pen, and the Kandh god is the same ; but he translates Badhal in one place (page 14) as 'the old god', though in a note to the same page he quotes as if affirming the *Calcutta Review* in translating the words 'Sun-god.' If Bura Deo means 'old god', it should, I suppose, be written 'Burha', but in the way the word is pronounced, I do not detect the aspirate.

Feasts : The Singbhum Gonds, though in most matters completely Hinduised, have a grand festival once every year in honor of Bura Deo. At the appointed time all the adult males of the tribe proceed to the forest, and clear a space round an *asan* tree (*Terminalia tomentosa*), and then offer a sacrifice in front of an altar on which the symbol of Bura Deo is set up. After which they enjoy a *ban bhojan*, or picnic in the woods, every man contributing to the feast. The *mahwa* tree (*Bassia latifolia*) is also held sacred by the Gonds, and truly no product of nature has greater claims on their gratitude.

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[90] In his Appendix 1.

Human sacrifices : I was credibly informed that the Gonds in Sirguja formerly offered human sacrifices to Bura Deo, and they go through the form of doing so still—a form prescribed, I believe, in the *Jogini Tantra*. Not long after the cession of Sirguja by Appa Sahib to the British Government, one of the Gond zamindars was arrested and imprisoned for having seized the 'Raj Guru', the head priest of the Sirguja family, and sacrificed him before the altar of Bura Deo. There is no doubt that this was done, though the Gond died in jail before he could be tried for the crime ; but his estate was confiscated. The Gonds now make up an image of a man with straw or other material, and find that it answers the purpose just as well.

In regard to the faith or religious belief of this people, I find very little on record, and the Gonds with whom I have conversed, have no ideas on the subject, except such as they have been indoctrinated with by the Brahma- ns or Gosains, at whose feet they now sit.

[282] Sir Richard Temple, in editing Mr. Hislop's *Essays*, has given us a translation of a very long Gondi poem, which it is said is recited by their bards ; but it is so obviously derived from Hindu teachers, of wild imagination, that it cannot be regarded as embodying any true Gondi traditional lore.

Story of Lingo and the legend of the origin of the Gonds : The 'argument' is, that the twelve families of Gonds are sprung from a boil which rose on the hand of Kalia Adao, who was similarly produced from the hand of Mahadeva. These Gonds filled the hills and valleys, and were distinguished by their promiscuous appetites and high odour. They stank in the nostrils of Mahadeva, and he shut them up in a cave, all except four brothers, who escaped. But Parvati loved the Gonds and *their smell*, and missing the latter, she engaged herself in devotional exercises to ascertain what had become of them. *Bhagovan*, God, listening to her prayer caused Lingo to be produced from a flower. He was fed on honey that dropped from the flowers of a fig tree. At nine years of age, he started on his travels and came on the four Gond brothers above mentioned. He remained with them, and helped to clear and prepare lands for cultivation, and in all he did he displayed miraculous power. One day they killed some deer, but had no fire wherewith to roast the venison. Then Lingo directed them to the abode of a giant Rikad, who had an old wife and seven lovely daughters. The youngest of the brothers was deputed, and he tried to steal the fire, but was detected by the giant who gave chase to the thief ; but Lingo made a lute and going to Rikad's house played and sang so charmingly, that the old giant delighted danced, and the old wife delighted danced, and so pleased were the seven daughters, that they left the paternal roof and followed Lingo home. He gave the seven girls to the four Gonds ; to the three eldest each two, and one to the youngest, and having prepared the bower and garlands, instituted and performed the marriage ceremonies proper for Gonds. "Lingo, the holy Saint", would not himself take a wife, and when the girls, fired by his insensibility to their charms, made love to him, he sternly rebuked them, but when they proceeded to take liberties with him, he flogged them. In revenge they reported to their husbands that Lingo had dishonored them, and the husbands put their benefactor to death in a very cruel manner.

Bhagovan, however, restored Lingo to life, and he then undertakes the delivery of the Gonds whom Mahadeva had shut up in a cave, and after accomplishing a series of tasks set him by that god, he obtains their release, and they form a settlement in the forest under his guidance. Lingo is next found calling before him all the Gond gods or devils and giving them names, and he then causes himself to be possessed by each in turn, and dances and prophesies, and a ritual of offerings and sacrifice is established. Next, by the selection of a venerable man of the assembly to be Pardhan, an order of priests is established. The Pardhan was instructed to negotiate marriages, and a ritual of marriage was given out which embraces all the ceremonies, of probable Hindu origin, observed among the Gonds of the present day. Lingo further enjoined his Gonds to practise hospitality, and gave them permission to sing, dance, laugh, and drink, as much as they liked.

Of the personages mentioned in the above disjointed legend, the Gonds whom I have met with know nothing. I have frequently questioned them on the subject, but they never apparently had heard of Lingo and his feats. Some Murpachi, or four God Gonds, in Bamra told me they had heard of Lingo, but he belonged to the Western Gonds.

[283] **Disposal of the dead** : The half-Hinduised Gonds we meet in Bengal have no peculiar funeral ceremonies, and, so far as I have been able to judge, evince but little reverence for their dead ; but [91] amongst the Marias, who are probably the best type that we possess of the primitive Gond, the dead are '*waked*' in the Irish fashion. Summoned by a peculiar beat of a drum, all the Marias within hearing attend. A cow is killed, ample provision of the intoxicating beverage called Lundi is made, and the guests are feasted. If the deceased was an adult male, the body is next secured by cords to a Mahwa tree in an erect posture and then burned. This is a very singular variation from the ordinary method, and has in all probability some special and local origin. The funeral rites are performed by the nephew of the deceased. After cremation, the ashes are collected and buried by the side of a road ; a large slab of gneiss is erected over the grave ; and the tail of the slaughtered cow is attached to it as a token that the obsequies of the deceased have been decently performed. Children and women are always buried, and perhaps further enquiry by Captain Glasford, to whom I am indebted for the above account, would have shown that amongst the Marias as amongst the Kaurs, all males who die unmarried are similarly disposed of.

The Marias, like the Kols and Oraons, are deeply imbued with a dread of witchcraft and of the power of the evil eye, and when there is the slightest suspicion that a death has ensued from such a cause, the burning of the body is postponed till it is made to point out the delinquent. The relations solemnly call on the corpse to do this, and the theory is, that if there has been foul play of the nature indicated, the body on being taken up will force the bearers to convey it to the house of the person by whom the spell was cast. If this be three times repeated the owner of the house is condemned, his place is destroyed, and he is expelled from the district.

Characteristics : Socially I consider the Hinduised or semi-Hinduised Gonds to be the least interesting of the great families of the aborigines of India. They have none of the lively disposition of the Oraons, or of the free dignified demeanour which characterises many of the Singbhum Kols. They are in character reserved, sullen, and suspicious. They are indifferent cultivators and careless about the appearance of their homesteads, and they are withal singularly ill-favoured, and though some of the wealthier families have formed series of alliances with other races which have improved their looks, I can point to many who have tried this in vain, and who show to this day features more closely resembling the lower Negro type than any I have met with amongst the tribes of Bengal. They often have short crisp curly hair, and though it is said, and no doubt truly, that this is far removed from the regular woolly covering of a Negro's head, I have generally found such hair in conjunction with features very noticeably Negro in type, and accompanying a very dark skin. They are larger and heavier in build than the Oraons or Kols, and with none of the graceful physique to be found in both these tribes.

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[91] Captain Glasford's *Report*, *Selection*, No. XXXIX, quoted above.

It is probable that a more accurate knowledge of the wild hill Gonds would have enabled me to have shown that they are not devoid of those pleasant traits which render us generally partial to the primitive hill races. The description given by an officer[92] of the Dhur Gonds in Narsinghpur proves that they have much in common with other tribes of Central India. They are represented as a wild race, supported by a blind [284] fatalism through lives of privation, disease, and danger. "A true Gond will commit a murder, but he will not tell a lie. Though skilled in medicinal herbs, in illness he prefers trusting to fate. He will not turn from a tiger, but will fly from cholera. Like a dog he sets fidelity above all other virtues, and will without hesitation take life at the bidding of his master. These qualities adapt the Gonds for services of danger, and they are said to make admirable miners in the coal mines of Mohpani."

They have been tried as soldiers and were not found wanting in pluck, but they cannot be made to submit to discipline.

These Gonds are described as flat nosed, thick lipped, straight haired, with frames short and thick set. The few who pass unscathed the constant risks and hardships of their forest life, are remarkable for longevity, and do not readily show signs of old age.

A Gond ordinarily retains sound teeth and black hair to the day of his death. In this particular they have the advantage over many kindred tribes. The happy disposition of the Oraon does not avert the decay to which most people have to submit as they approach the close of life.

Artizans : The hill Gonds appear to be very backward in arts. An artizan of their own race is rarely met with, but like other tribes they have availed themselves of the services of low Aryan craftsmen who live with them, accommodate themselves to Gond habits of impurity, and in return for a scanty means of subsistence do all the weaving and pottery required.

Amongst the social customs that are described, it is strange to find no mention of the pastime which the Oraons and Kols are so passionately fond of—dancing,—but I believe this may arise from their reticence before strangers. I have expressed my belief that the [93] Boyars of Sirguja, &c., are a tribe of Gonds, and they dance and sing merrily enough. A description of a Boyar dance that I witnessed may help the solution of the question of their consanguinity. Half a dozen young women holding hands as low down by their sides as possible, and bending their bodies forward till the clasped hands are within a foot of the ground. The men, in front of them, and detached, with drums and girdles of bells, singing, playing, and capering sometimes in an erect position, sometimes squatting on their hams. The girls' step is very simple and quiet. The left foot is advanced a short step, the right foot brought up to its heel, then right retires and left assumes its former position, but as they move they sidle round so as to make a half circle. The girls were all neatly clothed and clean and in good condition, but not beauties, both sexes had broad snub noses, large mouths, thick projecting lips, faces round from fulness of cheek, brown skins. Girls very plump figures : and this was the burden of their song.

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[92] Mr. C. Grant, C. S., *Selections*, Government of India, No. LIII, page 10.

[93] I have written 'Boyars', because I find the word so spelt in maps, and it appeared to me to be in accord with the pronunciation ; but I find that the Jashpur and Sirguja chiefs write it Bhuinhars. Some of the tribe whom I recently conversed with, declared that they and the Parheyas were of one family. This is quite possible. See page [131] for Parheyas, and [134] for Boyars. The Boyars may be a connecting link between the Gonds and Oraons.

No one sings with me, who will be my spouse ?
The tiger seizes the Asur (iron smelter) and eats him, who will be my spouse ?
Go father and mother, who will be my spouse ?
Why do I want a pitcher ?
Why need I a support for it ?
There is no one to ask for water,
Who will be my spouse ?

SECTION 4

THE KANDHS

[285] Geographical distribution : In the most southern region of Bengal, from the eastern limit of Gondwana to the sea cost, are situated the feudal dependencies or Tributary Mahals, in which alone the Kandh race are found. The meridional limit of their western extension passes through Bamra, and, except as wanderers from their fatherland, they are not found further north than the 22nd degree of latitude. They extend south as far as Bastar, whence their position as the aboriginal people is taken up by the Savaras or Sauras.

There appears to be a difference of opinion amongst authorities as to the origin or derivation of the name. Some consider it to be a kindred word with Gond, and that it should be written Kand, both being derived from the Tamul *Kandas*, a hill. Others say that it is derived from *Kandrā*, an arrow ; but however derived, unlike most names of the kind, it is acccpted by the people as their national designation, and as I am informed that in Orissa it is usually written Kandh, I will retain that spelling.

My personal acquaintance with the Kandhs is very limited. I have seen a few in attendance on tributary chiefs, and have fallen in with some families of the tribe in the Bonai dependency ; but they had been too long dwelling in a servile position amongst aliens to have retained any distinctive or typical characteristics of their race, and could converse only in Uriya. I noticed, however, that physically they were finer men than the people about them, who were Gonds, Bhuiyas, and Pans (Panvas). They were as tall as the average Hindu, and not much darker in complexion ; while in features, many of them might have been taken for Hindus of the laboring classes.

Their carriage and bearing reminded me of the Larkas of Singbhum. It struck me at the time that they were a mixed race ; that in them the Kol, the Gond, and the Aryan, were probably blended, and if there be no error in the accounts we receive of them, one of their peculiarities is an utter disregard of the precautions practised by neighbouring tribes for the preservation of the purity of the blood. It was a custom with some of them to destroy their own female children and buy as wives daughters of aliens. Very little appears to have been known of the Kandhs till British officers were brought face to face with these mountaineers whilst engaged in operations for the reduction of the great Gumsur estate in the Ganjam District, the chief of which had rebelled and taken refuge amongst them. Mr. Stirling, in his account of Orissa or Katak, notices them as forming the principal part of the population of "Killah Rampur", which was thence called the 'Kandrah Dandpat,' and adds that "the natives have the idea of a district situated between Daspalla, Boad, and Gumsur, inhabited entirely by this tribe, which they call Kandra. This then was the extent of our knowledge of the people when British troops entered Gumsur in 1835.[94]

Human sacrifices : The astounding discovery was then made that we included amongst our fellow subjects a whole people who practised human secrifice and female infanticide on a scale and with a cruelty which had never been surpassed by the most savage of nations, and from that period to the close of the year **[286]** 1861, the strenuous efforts of very able officers were directed to the repression of these most appalling crimes.

Hitherto the Government had exercised little or no interference with the inhabitants of what are called the Maliahs or hill districts, between the Mahanadi and Ganjam, and this added greatly to the difficulty of carrying out the policy adopted, which was an attempt to eradicate the deeply rooted superstitions of a whole nation with the least possible display of force. It was hoped that something might be effected through the chiefs ; but it was found that they exercise but a nominal control over the Kandh Maliahs.

The Meriah sacrifices, as they were called, and Kandh female infanticide, may now be regarded as amongst the plague spots of the land which have been effectually cured and obliterated by the enlightened treatment and strong hand of the British Government. It seems to be admitted, not only that the practices have ceased, but that the people have been actually weaned from the fears and superstitions which gave rise to them. Nevertheless, no account of the Kandhs would be complete without a description of the mysterious and awe-inspiring rites of a Meriah sacrifice, and a detail of the circumstances under which female infants were so unmercifully massacred.

The Kandhs are strictly an agricultural people, and the salient points of their religious belief all have reference to the fertilization of the earth. They are divided into two sects. One called Bura, worship the supreme God under that name, and hold human sacrifice in abhorrence. The other sect devote themselves to Tari, the earth-goddess, who, by shedding her own blood on sterile soil, manifested to her votaries its marvellously beneficial effects, and persuaded them that this process of fertilization must be continued by periodical human sacrifices in her honor.

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[94] In a report by Major Roughsedge, dated 25th March 1821, he notices that two Kandhs had been introduced to him by the Raja of Boad. One of them named Ghasi Malik was soon after implicated in the attack on a village that was plundered by the Kandhs, when twenty of the villagers were murdered. This is the first mention I have found of the Bengal Kandhs in official documents.

It was incumbent on the Kandhs to purchase their victims.[95] Unless bought with a price, they were not deemed acceptable to the goddess, and, as a rule, victims from their own tribe were not thus procurable ; but it sometimes happened that in bad seasons, Kandhs were reduced to selling their children, and they might then be purchased as Meriahs.

The agents employed were usually people of the Pan or Panwa class, a low tribe of bastard Hindus, who are found diffused amongst the population of all the Tributary Mahals, under different denominations, as Pans or Panwas, Chiks, Gandas, Pankas.

These agents sometimes purchased, but more frequently kidnapped, the children, whom they sold to the Kandhs, and they were so debased that they occasionally sold their own offspring, though they knew of course the fate that awaited them.

The word Meriah[96] is Uriya, not Kandh. The Kandhs call the victims Toki or Keddi. Persons of any race or age and of either sex were acceptable, if purchased, or the children of purchased Meriahs. Numbers were bought and held in readiness, and, during their period of probation or preparation, were well treated and fed. Male and female Meriahs were encouraged to cohabit, and other persons might have intercourse with female Meriahs, and in this manner numbers of children were produced, who were all treated as dedicated to destruction. If a male Meriah had intercourse with the daughter of a Kandh, it was considered a distinction.

[287] Ten or twelve days before the time appointed for a sacrifice, the hair of the victim selected, till then unshaved, is cut off, and the villagers, having bathed, go to the sacred grove with the priest, who there invokes the goddess, and proclaims to her that they are preparing for her the repast she loves best, and implores her favor in return. The festival itself lasts three days, and it is a time of unbridled license, drunken feasting and mad dances "under excitement which the goddess is believed to inspire, and which it would be impious to resist."[97] On the second morning, the victim who has been kept fasting from the preceding evening, is carefully washed, dressed in a new garment, and led forth from the village in solemn procession, with music and dancing, to the Meriah grove. This, as with the Oraons and other tribes, is a remnant of the old forest, kept sacred from the axe and haunted by ghosts and spirits. In the centre of the grove a post is set up sometimes between two plants of the *Sankissar* shrub, to which the victim is bound in a sitting posture by the priest. He is then anointed with oil, *ghee*, and turmeric, adorned with flowers and worshipped, and there is now great contention amongst the bystanders to obtain some relic of his sacred person, even a portion of the unguent with which he has been anointed. He is thus left all night, during which the licentious feasting of the previous night is resumed, and the air resounds with horrid revelry. At noon on the third morning these orgies terminate, and "the assemblage proceeds with stunning shouts and pealing music to consummate the sacrifice."

The victim must not die in bonds, and to prevent escape, of which there have been instances, the arms and legs are broken, or stupefaction by opium is produced.

The priest now offers up prayers to the earth-goddess for full granaries, increase of children, cattle, pigs, and poultry, and for the decrease or disappearance of tigers and snakes; besides which, each individual of the assembled multitude gives expression to the wish that is at the moment uppermost in his thoughts. The priest then recites the tradition of the origin of the sacrifice and the necessity they were under of continuing it, and this, according to the author I am now chiefly quoting, is followed by a very long and somewhat sentimental, but at the same time argumentative, conversation between the priest and Meriah, the object of the one being to show that the victim must calmly submit to suffering in a cause so greatly to the benefit of mankind, and that he had nothing to complain of, as the Kandhs had purchased him for that especial purpose; and of the other, to prove that he had been cruelly deceived, that he had not been a party to his own sale, but believing that he had been purchased as a laborer, he had honestly worked for his employer.

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[95] Account of Religion of the Kandhs, by Major Macpherson, *Jonrnal, Royal Asiatic Society*: Vol. XIII, part ii.

[96] *Loc. cit.*, page 244.

[97] *Loc. cit.*, page 246. The whole of the above account is taken from the same work.

The actual sacrifice to the earth goddess was performed in different ways, all brutal enough—brutality is indeed too mild a term to apply to it. Major Macpherson's account proceeds as follows :—

"The priest, assisted by the chief and one or two of the elders of the village, now takes the branch of a green tree, cleft several feet down the centre. They force the victim to place himself within the reft, fitting it, in some districts, to his throat. Cords are then twisted round the open extremity of the stake, which the priest, aided by his assistants, strives with his whole force to close. He then wounds the victim slightly with his axe, and on this, the crowd throws itself on the sacrifice and strips the flesh from the bones, leaving untouched the head and intestines." The remains are next day burned [288] on a funeral pile, with a further sacrifice of a sheep; and the ashes are scattered over the field, or are made into a paste with which the floors of the houses and granaries are smeared. Subsequently a bullock is given to the father or procurer of the victim, and another is sacrificed and eaten at the feast which terminates the rite; but one year after the human sacrifice, the blood thirsty Tari Penna is reminded of it by an offering of a pig.

Major Macpherson further notes that the Meriah in some districts is put to death slowly by fire, the great object being to draw from the victim as many tears as possible, in the belief that the cruel Tari will proportionately increase the supply of rain!

Colonel Campbell[98] thus describes the *modus operandi* in Chinna Kimedy. "The miserable Meriah is dragged along the fields, surrounded by a crowd of half intoxicated Kandhs, who, shouting and screaming, rush upon him, and with their knives cut the flesh piece-meal from his bones, avoiding the head and bowels, till the living skeleton, dying from loss of blood, is relieved from torture, when its remains are burnt and the ashes mixed with the new grain to preserve it from insects."

Captain Mac Vicar,[99] in a report dated the 6th April 1851, thus describes the mode of performing the sacrifice in Maji Deso, midway between Boad and Patna. "On the day of sacrifice, after the appointed ceremonies, the Meriah is surrounded by the Kandhs, who beat him violently on the head with the heavy metal bangles, which they purchase at the fair, and wear on these occasions. If this does not destroy life, an end is put to his sufferings by strangulation by means of a slit bamboo. Strips of flesh are then cut off the back, and each recipient carries his portion to the stream which waters his fields, and there suspends it on a pole. The remains of the mangled carcass are then buried, and funeral obsequies are performed and repeated a year afterwards." This is apparently in imitation of the Hindu *shradh*.

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[98] Report, dated 17th March 1849, Selections, Home Department, No. V, page 108.

[99] *Loc. cit.*, page 116, Captain Mac Vicar's Report.

But it was more usual for the fragments of flesh to be buried in the fields. When a sacrifice took place, a deputation from all villages of Tari Kandhs within a certain radius attended it, and returned the same day, or as rapidly as possible, with the flesh, a little of which was given to each head of a family. To secure its arrival in time, it was sometimes sent by relays of men and conveyed with postal fleetness fifty or sixty miles.[100]

Female infanticide : Hideous and extraordinary as were the bloody rites above described, it appears to me more wonderful and shocking that female infanticide should have prevailed to such an exterminating extent amongst the Kandhs. The neighbouring races all treat their female children with exemplary tenderness, most of them indeed regard the girls as marketable and valuable property, to be carefully nurtured, in order that they may grow in beauty and appear to the best advantage when called for.

The Kandhs had to pay high prices for wives of their own tribe—a fact which they assigned as one of their reasons for wishing to get rid of their maidens. Mr. Russel, of the Madras Civil Service, in a report[101] dated August 1836, first brought the subject to notice. The expenses attending the marriage rites were then said [289] to be the motive. They killed their own girls and purchased wives from other parts of the country. The custom was not universal. It was practised in what was called the middle Kandh region, but even there some tracts were honorably excepted, as Digi and Bodo Ghoro. Major Macpherson[102] reported in April 1842, that in many villages he did not find a single female child. Amongst the causes assigned are, 1st, that male births are increased by the destruction of female infants ; 2nd, that it is better to destroy girls in their infancy than to allow them to grow up and become causes of strife afterwards ; but the most probable solution of the question was brought to light by Captain McNeile after visiting the districts of Putiadeso, Sorobisi, Korkapatah, Jhumka, and Ryaghada, where infanticide, both male and female, prevailed to an appalling extent.[103]

When a child is born,[104] an astrologer called a Jani or Desauri is summoned and consulted by the parents. He constructs a horoscope or pretends to do so, and consults a palm-leaf manuscript called a *punji*, in which are written sentences interspersed with rude pictures of gods and devils. After certain ceremonies the 'stylus' of bone or ivory, used to write on the palm-leaf, is thrust into the book, and the fate of the child is decided according to the image or sentence which it strikes. If from this test it be predicted that the child is not likely to prove a blessing to its parents, but rather that misfortune may befall them if they attempt to rear it, the living infant is placed in a new earthen pot and removed in the direction of the point of the compass from which, if the child were spared, evil might be expected, and buried. A fowl is sacrificed over the grave.

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[100] Colonel Campbell.

[101] Selections from the Records of Government of India, Home Department, No. V, page 2.

[102] *Loc. cit.*, page 47, Report of April 1842.

[103] Another reason comes from Ganjam, "that deceased female ancestors are re-born in the same families." Ms. Report by Captain Smith, Assistant Agent.

[104] Selections, Madras Government, No. LXXXI, Captain A.C. McNeile's Report, dated 12th May 1857,

The Desauris are generally Uriyas, who practise on the credulity of the Kandhs, but in Korkapatah and Jhumka the Desauris are Kandhs, who do not use a *punji*, but do the astrology and vaticination themselves.

Of the numerous Meriahs recovered from the Kandhs, a large proportion were young girls, who, becoming wards of Government, were brought up with some care, and were more or less educated. It was deemed good policy to give some of these damsels in marriage to Kandh bachelors of respectability, and it was expected that they at least would not outrage their own feeling as mothers by consenting to the destruction of their offspring. Subsequently, however, Colonel Campbell ascertained that these ladies had no female children, and on being closely questioned, they admitted that at their husbands' bidding they had destroyed them.

I now proceed to detail briefly the measures which were undertaken to repress these barbarous customs.

Measures to suppress the barbarous customs : The first action taken by the officers of Government towards reclaiming the Kandhs was an effort to release the Meriahs. It was found that the Kandhs were inclined to yield to mild coercion in the matter, and Mr. Russel, in a despatch, dated 11th May 1837, reported that 29 Meriahs had been surrendered. Some had been kidnapped, who were restored to their friends ; 18 were children from three to ten years of age, who had been sold to the Kandhs by their [290] parents ; they were retained as Government wards. In the following year, Captain Campbell, then Assistant Collector in charge of Gumsur, effected the release of 100 Meriah children, and it was found that they comprised people of all races, religion or caste, even Kandh children were amongst them.

In a despatch, dated July 1838, Lieutenant Hill, of the Survey Department, described the practice of human sacrifice as existing in the Kandh Maliahs of Gumsur in Daspala, Boad, and Sohnpur, just south of the Mahanadi, and in Chinna Kimedy, Pedda Kimedy, Jaipur, and Bastar. The Bastar Raja had the credit of having himself organised the most extensive sacrifice that had ever been heard of, on which occasion twenty-seven adult males had been immolated ; in fact it was not supposed that any Kandh Maliah was free from the stain.

The proceedings on the Madras side led to enquiries being made on the Bengal side, and there also some Meriahs were given up to the demand or at the request of Messrs. Ricketts and Mills, but it was found that in the feelings of the people, or in their determination to carry on a custom which they believed necessary to their existence, no real change had been effected. They indeed gave up some Meriahs, but reserved many and bought more ; and the sacrifices continued. The Agent to the Governor General, South-Western Frontier, in 1844, finding that the Kandhs in the Tributary Mahals under his jurisdiction were no better than their neighbours, entered on the field and succeeded in obtaining the release of a few Meriahs, but all officers employed were now convinced that far more stringent measures than those hitherto adopted were necessary, and a special agency under one Head, armed with full authority to use force, was advised.

On the Madras side, from the time of the Gumsur war, several officers had been engaged in measures, mostly of a conciliatory nature, to wean the Kandhs from their dark superstitions, In 1844, Lieutenant Hicks was appointed Assistant Superintendent, Tributary Mahals, for the repression of human sacrifices. Moral pressure was, however, all that was attempted, and though Meriahs were recovered, and some were snatched from the very altars, the sacrifices did not cease. The number, however, had, it was said, diminished from hundreds to ten or a dozen per annum ; but this improvement was not general. It is noticed[105] that the Kandhs of Boad had promised acquiescence in the wishes of Government, but they deemed it right to offer Tari enough to last her a long time before they gave it up, and the valedictory sacrifice is said to have comprised one hundred and twenty-five victims.

In 1845, the Government of India determined on bringing all the Kandh Maliahs under one system of management, and Act XXI of that year was passed, separating them from the ordinary jurisdiction of the Courts with a view to their being placed under special rules. And, in November 1845, Captain William Macpherson, who had been long employed in the Kandh districts, and to whom we are indebted for so much valuable information about the people, arrived in Ganjam with the title of "Agent, Governor General, for the suppression of human sacrifices and female infanticide in the hill tracts of Orissa." But still the orders were to abstain from violence, and the first season's operations were not encouraging.

The Kandhs of Boad had become impressed with the notion that further yielding on their part would lead to their taxation and subjection to forced labor : and early in 1846, **[291]** we find them threatening or making an attack on the Agent's camp and demanding and obtaining the restoration of rescued Meriahs. This led to reprisals, which of course greatly impeded the proposed policy of conciliation, and affairs were further complicated by the rebellion of the Raja of Angul, one of the tributaries on the Mahanadi, who appears to have fomented to the utmost the resistance of the Kandh tribes. Serious disturbances followed ; troops were employed on a large scale and all authority temporarily transferred from the Agent to the Officer in Command, Brigadier General Dyer.

I have no details of the military operations which followed. On the 21st of April 1847, Lieutenant-Colonel Campbell was appointed Agent, and coming on the scene with powers to coerce, which were perhaps all that was wanting to ensure success to the measures of the previous agency, he was soon in a position to report[106] the submission of the Bisai Chiefs of the Kandh hill tracts visited by him, and the restoration of peace to the disturbed districts. The operations against Angul were successful. The Raja was deposed and subsequently captured, and as his estate was confiscated there was no difficulty in bringing into subjection all the Kandhs whom he had influenced. With Boad there had been at first some difficulty, but on the 1st April 1848, Colonel Campbell reported that with one or two exceptions all the influential men had pledged themselves by the most solemn oaths, (sworn on a tiger skin and on some earth) thenceforth to abandon human sacrifices, and in earnest of their sincerity 235 Meriahs were given up. During the following season, the Saurada Maliahs and the more remote hill region of Chinna Kimedy were visited by the Agency.

Chinna Kimedy was found to be divided into seven districts each under a Hindu chief or Pater, subdivided into Matahs, (groups of villages or parganas), and villages each under a

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[105] Macpherson's *Memorials of Service*, page 246.

[106] Kandh Agency, & *Calcutta Review*, p. 138. Colonel Campbell's Report to Government, 1st April, 1848.

Kandh headman called Maji (so this title is found thus far south). There was little intercourse between the districts owing to feuds. The country is described as in steppes. In the second range of hills the villages are far apart, and with few exceptions poor, and the country has a neglected unreclaimed appearance, a succession of hills covered with *sal* and bamboos. The districts on the upper ranges are more picturesque, and the cultivated valleys appear fertile ; but throughout this hilly region, whether bountifully or sparingly dealt with by nature, human sacrifice and female infanticide generally prevailed, the only exceptions being in the districts of Sarangad, Chandraghari and Degi of Kosadah.

The annual season for the sacrifice was about to commence when the Agent marched into this country ; but though not previously visited for the repression of human sacrifice, the design of holding it was at once abandoned, and eventually the whole people agreed to submit to the conditions proposed, and engaged to try if Tari would not, after all, be as well pleased with the blood of beasts as with human sacrifices. In this year, 1859, two hundred and six Meriahs were given up.

It was satisfactory to find that in the Boad highlands no blood had been shed since the last visit, and the Gumsur Maliahs were reported equally free from the stain.[107] It had providentially happened that an unusually productive and healthy season had distinguished the first year's dreaded intermission of the rite. We can well [292] conceive the anxiety that must have been felt by the whole tribe as they watched the sprouting seed and ripening grain and their joy when in the full promise of a bountiful harvest they felt assured that the earth goddess did not resent their abandonment of the ancient custom.

The total number of Meriahs given up in the two seasons was 547.

It is useless to follow the operations of the Agent through the remainder of the Kandh districts. In Jaipur it was found that human sacrifices had been annually offered to Maniksoro, the god of war, as well as to the earth goddess, and the ceremony was performed in the following manner :—

A stout wooden post about six feet long is firmly fixed in the ground. Close to it a narrow grave is dug. The victim is tied to the post by his long hair ; assistants to the officiating priest hold out his arms and legs so that the body is supported over the grave with the face downwards. The priest standing on the right side then recites an invocation to the god, praying for success in battle and preservation "from the tyranny of kings and their officers," and as he prays he at intervals hacks at the neck of the unfortunate victim avoiding the infliction of a mortal wound. Then the priest addresses him in consolatory words, assuring him that he would soon have the honor of being devoured by the great god Maniksoro for their benefit, and that his obsequies would be performed decorously, and reminding him, if still unreconciled to his fate, that they had bought him for this special purpose from his parents. He is then decapitated, the body falls into the grave, and the bleeding head remains suspended from the post till the birds devour it.

Colonel Campbell had some difficulty in Jaipur, but eventually succeeded there, as elsewhere, rescuing or causing to be given up 77 Meriah males, and 117 females. The following extract from Colonel Campbell's last published report sums up the work :—

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[107] Colonel Campbell's Report, 18th March, 1859,

"It affords me heartfelt satisfaction to be able to report thus of the suppression (I will not presume to say of the complete suppression,—for that will depend on our future supervision and watchfulness) of the Meriah rite in Gumsur, Boad, Chinna Kimedy, Jaipur, Kalahandy, and Patna."

Strange to say after the suppression of human sacrifices in the Maliahs of Jaipur it was found that the practice existed in the low country, and the agent, Captain A. C. McNeile, wrote[108] that in suppressing it there, he had to deal with relatively civilized and educated men and not with semi-barbarous tribes. It does not appear that Kandhs were implicated ; the victims were generally of the 'Tura class' purchased from their parents. At the town of 'Mulcagherry,' 100 of these children reserved for sacrifice were found and were surrendered.

On the 18th December 1861, in consequence of the arrangements which had been made for the organization of Police in the Ganjam and Vizagapatam agencies, the special agency for the hill tracts of Orissa was abolished.

With regard to the existing feeling of the Kandhs on the subject which led to the formation of the hill tract agency, I append an extract from MS. notes written by Mr. T. E. Ravenshaw, now Superintendent, Katak Tributary Estates, on the Kandh Mals, in his jurisdiction :—

[293] "Human sacrifice is, I believe, completely forgotten. The people have no objection to talk about it and point out the spots where the rite was performed, but they speak of their former superstitions on the subject as a delusion. They thought, they say, that human blood improve the quality of the turmeric, their most profitable crop ; but they now find that the earth yields its increase as before and the turmeric is as good as ever it was." Mr. Ravenshaw does not find that animal sacrifice has been substituted, or that flesh of any kind is now buried to fertilize the earth. The superstition has entirely died out. He adds that infanticide where it was practised is also entirely suppressed.

Tribal divisions : There is nothing on record which gives us any clue to the early history of the Kandhs. We find them occupying the highlands of the southern hill districts of old Orissa, following the ramification of ranges into various petty states, and claimed as subjects by the chiefs of those states whom Mr. Stirling and the historians of the Meriah operations recognise as Hindus, and who like the hill chiefs further north style themselves Rajputs. It appears probable that in the Kandhs we have all that remains of the aboriginal inhabitants of this region, and that they were masters of the entire country, the lowlands as well as highlands, till they were forced back into the hills by the extension of the Hindu kingdom of Orissa ; but the Hindu chiefs, if such they be, exercised very little authority over them, at least over those who lived in the Maliahs or highlands Major Macpherson divides the Kandhs into three classes, Betiah, a servile class, who worked for hire or held lands on conditions of labor ; Beniah who occupied the skirts of the hills and paid rent for their lands or held them on a more honorable description of service ; and Maliah or highlanders who were virtually independent, though they performed homage to the chief on his accession, and, if well disposed to his service, occasionally took the field at his bidding.

The social organization and government of the Maliah Kandhs very closely resemble the ancient polity of the Mundas, which we still to a great extent preserve in the Singbhum Kolhan.

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[108] Madras Selections, Captain A.C. McNeile's Report, dated 1st May, 1855.

Polity of the Kandhs : Over each village an elder presides[109] called an Abbaye corresponding with the Singbhum Munda ; and a number of adjacent villages form a district under a district Abbaye like a Singbhum Pir under its Manki. The district Abbaye is, or ought to be, the lineal descendant or representative of the leader of the colony when the settlement was first made.

In addition to the above, Major Macpherson gives us a tribal Abbaye or Patriarch, the representative of the common ancestor of the tribe ; but as the division into tribes is not now geographically defined, people of various tribes living in one village, the duties of the tribal patriarch are chiefly to take notice of breaches of tribal rules. It is probable enough that formerly each tribe had its own locality, and as they took wives on the exogamous principle, they had to win their brides from a quarter more or less remote ; but this system is now broken up : people belonging to various tribes inhabit the same village, and there is nothing to prevent a man marrying a girl of the same street if he likes, except that it is more dignified to go to a distance for a wife.

In addition to the above, there is a federal Abbaye, the representative of a superior chief formerly selected to superintend the affairs of as extensive a tract of country as [294] could be conveniently placed under him. The offices are all hereditary ; but in regard to the federal Abbaye, though the succession never goes out of the family, the next-of-kin is sometimes set aside for a more competent relative.

National Assembly : The federal Abbaye may when he pleases convene a council of the heads of the people. They sit in the open air in concentric circles, the inner circle composed of the district and the tribal Abbayes, outside are the village Abbayes, and outside them the general public. Women may attend, but they take no part in the discussion. Major Macpherson highly commends the loyalty of the Kandhs to their head men. It is said that their devotion to the federal Abbaye "is equal to any that the annals of humanity record.[110]

Procedure. Oaths : At the great councils disputes regarding property and offences of all kinds are enquired into, and witnesses are examined on oath. The litigants are forced to put into their mouths rice moistened with the blood of a sheep which had been sacrificed to the earth goddess, and this, it is supposed, will inevitably cause the death of the person so sworn who swerves from the truth. If the dispute is about land, a morsel of the soil similarly placed has the same effect. They are also sworn on the skin of a tiger, like the Kols ; on the skin of a lizard (invoking scaliness of skin on the false witness) ; on the earth of an anthill ; and on a peacock's feather.

Penal Code : Serious offences against the person, homicide, and severe wounding, are regarded as private wrongs, and compensations may be adjudged. In murder-cases all the property of the murderer may be made over to the family of the deceased. In cases of wounding any portion of the offender's goods may be awarded to the injured party, and he is further bound liberally to provide for all the wants of the wounded man till his recovery. The code on the subject of unfaithfulness of wives is contradictory. In one place we are told that the husband may put the adulterer to death, in another that the latter has only got to make good the amount paid for the girl when she was asked in marriage.

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[109] *Calcutta Review*, Vol V, page 35

[110] *Calcutta Review*, Vol. V, page 42.

Succession : Succession to real property is always through males. Shares of personal property may be given to daughters. The rule of primogeniture is not acknowledged. The real property is divided amongst the sons. By one author[111] it is asserted that no division of property can take place during the life-time of the father, by another,[112] it is said that a son on his marriage quits the paternal roof and becomes a householder, receiving a share of the land from the hands of the father. Girls are not allotted to the shareholders as is the case in Singbhum, but the brothers are jointly responsible for their care till they marry.

Proprietorship in lands : The Maliah Kandhs[113] consider themselves absolute proprietors of the soil they cultivate, and in this view of their right, which was no doubt at one time common to all the primitive tribes, they are supported by the fact that even by the British Government they have not yet been required to pay rent. Mr. Ravenshaw informs me that if a Kandh of the Kandh tracts in modern Orissa be asked to specify his position or calling, he answers boldly, "I am a zamindar."[295] The chiefs have no pretensions to any right over the soil which is adverse to this claim of their people, and this is a point which has unfortunately in many instances been lost sight of in dealing with the aboriginal tribes. An Abbaye can have no right to alienate his title and interest in a village or district, yet such alienations have taken place in cases precisely analogous, and have been upheld by Courts acting in blind ignorance of the true position of the parties, thereby creating endless complications and intense dissatisfaction.

Sites of villages : The Kandhs love to build their houses on the slopes of the valley overlooking their cultivation which winds like a river amongst the hills.

Houses : The houses are small and low, but substantially constructed of plank inserted horizontally in grooves cut in the corner posts. The whole surface is plastered with mud. Each hut contains usually three apartments, in the centre the family dwells, one is used exclusively for cooking, and the third is a store-room. There is but one door which in the cold season is firmly closed, while the family sleep round a wood fire burning on a central hearth. The roof as well as the sides, is sometimes of plank. The houses have no plinths.

Separate accomodation for bachelors and spinsters : In each village there is a house assigned to the bachelors as their dormitory and club, and another for the maidens, and as it is said that chastity is not one of their virtues, and that free intercourse between the sexes is not discouraged, it may be assumed that the separation contemplated in this arrangement is not very rigidly enforced. I learn, however, from Mr. Ravenshaw's notes that in Boad the girls' dormitories are under charge of an elderly matron, who sleeps inside and locks the door. She sleeps very sound, I dare say.

Customs at child birth : Births are celebrated on the seventh day after the event by a feast given to the priest and to the whole village. The name is determined as with the Kols. The names of ancestors are called over as grains of rice are thrown into water, but Major Macpherson[114] adds that the oracle is required to show which of the ancestors is regenerated in the person of the child. The Kols have not the faintest idea of anything of the kind as the name of persons still living are frequently selected.

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[111] Major Macpherson.

[112] Lieutenant Frye, on the Kandh population of Orissa, *Journal, Royal Asiatic Society* Vol XVII.

[113] Lieutenant Frye.

Priests : According to the same author every Kandh village has its priest, but they have no official privileges or endowments, their only emoluments consisting of the fees paid by those who employ them, or in gifts from the community, when the religious ceremonies they conduct have a favorable issue. There appears to be no Levite class. The priestly office may be assumed by any one, who fancies or boldly asserts that he has been called thereto by a mandate of the deity duly communicated in a vision or dream. At the human sacrifices and mystic rites in honor of the earth goddess, the Jani, a recognized priest, always officiated ; but every head of a family could on ordinary occasions assume priestly functions, and the whole spirit of the Kandh policy renders it probable that originally all sacerdotal offices were combined in the patriarchs of families, villages, or circles, and that the mysterious Meriah rites and an order of priests came in together. I do not find any mention of priests in Mr. Ravenshaw's notes—their occupation, is gone. Major Macpherson records **[296]** the singular circumstance, that a class of Hindus are employed by the Kandhs as priestly co-adjutors in the service of the minor divinities. This alone would indicate that there has been a great change in their religion ; but it is probable that the low Hindus alluded to are but the Ojhas or Sorcerers whom the witchcraft superstition has called into existence. The belief of the Kandhs regarding sickness and physical afflictions of every description is the same as that of the Kols and Oraons.

Religion : Our knowledge of the religion of the Kandhs is derived from a very elaborate essay on the subject by the late Major J. C. Macpherson, C. B., which was read before the Royal Asiatic Society in 1852. The paper has been reproduced in the memorials of that officer published in 1865. It propounds a system of theocracy and ethics more profound than one would expect to find amongst so ignorant a people, but it appears to me to be a melange of Genesis, the several Hindu systems and primitive paganism. Colonel Campbell, who was for so many years employed amongst the Kandhs, is somewhat sceptical as to the purely Kandh origin of the scheme of religion thus ventilated ; but under the peculiar circumstances of the race, it is quite possible that such a system may have been gradually built up for them by Brahmans, Gosains, and other Hindus, who not only lived amongst them, but joined in their sacrifices, supplemented with notions gleaned from Missionary teaching or books.

The fundamental doctrines appear to be a belief in a Supreme Being, the source of good, and Creator of the universe, called Bura Penu, the god of light, or Bela Penu, the sun god, the same as the Dharmi of the Oraons and the Bedo Gosain of the Rajmahali highlanders who injured no one, and whom it was not therefore necessary to propitiate, and his wife Tari, who in antagonism to her husband, became the originator of all the ills that befall mankind. We are told that Bura Penu found his wife "wanting in affectionate compliance," which in a note is explained to mean that she declined to scratch his back ; but this simple domestic difference put it into Bura Penu's mind to clothe the world with vegetation, fill it with animal life and finally to create human beings to pay him the adoration and veneration which he expected and could not obtain from his wife. Mankind was created exempt from moral and physical evil, and thus enjoyed free intercourse with God. They lived without labour on the spontaneous abundance of the earth in perfect harmony, peace and innocence, and knew not that they were naked till Tari, like the old serpent, filled with envy at their happiness, sowed the seed of sin in their hearts, and like Pandora introduced all the ills that flesh is heir to. A few who withstood temptation and bore up against the powers of darkness, were elevated to the position of secondary gods, to whom the regulation of the affairs of the fallen brethren was consigned; but the consequences to the latter were terrible. The earth no longer yielded her abundance. Animals previously innocuous became vicious and destructive to life. Snakes became venomous and some plants poisonous. Man found out that he was naked and encumbering himself with clothing, lost the power of soaring through the air and skimming through the water, which in innocence he had possessed, and fierce strife raged between Bura and Tari, each contending for mastery.

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[114] Major Macpherson, *Calcutta Review*, Vol. V, p. 31.

Out of this contest two great sects arose, one holding that Bura, the other that Tari, had come off triumphant. [297] The sect of Bura believed that Bura punished Tari by the curse on her sex, tantamount to the "in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children," and that Tari, however malevolent and destructive she may be, can only strike when Bura permits. The sect of Tari believe that their goddess cannot be frustrated by Bura in her evil designs, but if she can be persuaded by adoration to abstain from injuring, man will be free from misfortune. She alone therefore should be propitiated.

Notwithstanding the tiff between Bura and Tari, their union was fruitful, and six godlings were produced to meet the primary wants of fallen man.

First, Pidzu Pennu, the rain god; second, Burbhi Pennu, the goddess of spring, who gives new vegetation and first fruits; third, Pitteri Pennu, the god of increase and gain; fourth, Klambo Pennu, the god of the chase; fifth, Loha Pennu, the iron god or god of war; sixth, Sundi Pennu, the god of boundaries.

The above clearly indicate the most important requirements of such a people, and I do not doubt that the gods on this list may have been very generally recognised. They are styled inferior deities of the first class.

The addition of a seventh deity to the above also included amongst the children of Bura Pennu was clearly an after-thought. Dinga Pennu, the judge of the dead, is probably the Hindu Yama.[115]

The third class of gods are the descendants of the human beings who resisted evil. They are now the presiding spirits over villages, hills, streams, tanks, fountains, houses, forests, ravines, and orchards. Each of these gods is worshipped when his turn comes, that is, when a requisition is made on the department over which he presides. Offerings are presented, and for each a special form of address is to be found in Major Macpherson's essay, which is poetical enough to be introduced in an epic, but in the aggregate they are too long for my purpose. In one of these invocations the priest is made to say, truly enough, "Were we, O god of streams, constantly to expend our means upon your rites as well as those of the other gods, we should lose our lands, and then where would be your worship ?"

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[115] In Major Macpherson's first essay on the religion of the Kandhs, read before the Royal Asiatic Society on the 20th November 1841, there is no reference to Dinga Pennu. The name first appears in the second essay, which was published in part II Vol. XIII, of the *Journal, Royal Asiatic Society.*

The Kandh Yama has no sinecure, for the Kandhs are represented by Major Macpherson as possessing each four souls. Colonel Campbell and other writers who are well acquainted with their habits, did not discover that, in their own estimation, they had any souls at all, and this is certainly more in unison with the creed of their neighbours, but it appears that many Abbayes were men of education fond of studying the mysteries of the Hindu religion, and as it was from them that Major Macpherson chiefly derived his information, I am not surprised that the religious views of these authorities embraced the Hindu doctrines of metempsychosis and *nirvana*, or final absorption into the deity, which I think must be what is meant by[116] "restoration to communion with Bura." The notion of four souls apparently resolves itself into this, that the more enlightened Kandhs had adopted the Hindu doctrine of the immortality of the soul, and its liability to an immense variety of probations by successive re-births in an improved state or lower condition, according to the views taken by the divine judge of the life just quitted ; until, [298] purged of all taint, it is finally absorbed into the divine essence. This theory disposes of three of the souls described by Major Macpherson viz., first the soul that is beatified, secondly, the soul that has to bear punishment for an ill-spent life ; and thirdly, the soul that is re-born in the tribe, which must all be regarded as the one soul of the Hindus in different conditions. The fourth soul Major Macpherson describes as a soul which dies on the dissolution of the body, or in other words there is a belief in no soul at all, which is probably the creed of most untutored Kandhs.

Of the Kandh gods, Bura and Tari alone dwell in heaven[117], Dinga resides on a rock or mountain in the region beyond the sea, from which the sun rises, so the souls have to cross the water (query, the Baitarani or Styx) to get to him. It is called Gripavali[118], the leaping rock. This idea is also apparently borrowed from the Brahmans.

The other Gods of the Kandhs live exclusively upon the earth. But when they move, they skim along at a short distance above its surface invisible to human eyes, but seen by the lower animals. They feed on the sacrifices offered to them, but also help themselves, as the farmer knows to his cost when he finds blind ears in his corn.

The rites observed at the Meriah sacrifices to the blood-thirsty Tari have been described. Her gentler husband, the supreme god Bura, receives the adoration of all his votaries at the same period of the year[119], and though it is supposed that Bura demands no blood, a pig is at this season sacrificed in his honor, and the blood scattered widely about. At the festival there is much dancing, feasting, and drinking, and every kind of licentious indulgence. Many of the Bura-ites practised female infanticide and justified the act as one which was permitted and even enjoined by Bura, who by the conduct of his wife was unfairly prejudiced against all the sex.

I proceed now to avail myself of the information kindly furnished by my friend Mr. T. E. Ravenshaw, C. S., Commissioner of Katak, regarding the Kandh country in his province.

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[116] See *Memorials of Service*, page 92.

[117] *Jonrnal, Royal Asiatic Society*, Vol. X, page 228. *Memorials of Service*, page 92.

[118] The residence of the Hindu Yama is at the extremity of the earth floating on the waters.

[119] *Memorials of Service*, page 107.

The Boad Kandhs : At the close of the operations for the suppression of Meriah sacrifices in Boad, the chief of that dependency doubting his capability of controlling the Kandhs on that question, and dreading the consequence to himself of any relapse on their part, ceded to Government all that portion of his territory which comprised the Kandh Maliahs or as they are now styled Mals. This portion of Boad rises abruply about 1,500 feet, and the approaches to it are all very steep and difficult ascents. They lead you to an undulating plateau portioned off by numerous ranges of low hills in the valleys between which wind the principal sheets of cultivation. The villages are prettily situated on the borders of the cultivation, and the hills rising from behind them are densely covered with *sal*.

The size of the villages varies in proportion to the water supply. In a few places the clearings are extensive, and the settlements have a thriving and comparatively civilised appearance.

The area of this tract known as the Katak Khand Mals is 480 square miles, and the population, numbering 45,000 souls, live in 677 villages.

[299] **Present government** : No revenue whatever is derived from the Kandhs. The Superintendent (Mr. Ravenshaw) has a native assistant called a Tahsildar (tax collector) which appears rather a misnomer, who resides in the Mals and has the powers of a Subordinate Judge and Assistant Magistrate. A Police force is maintained consisting of one inspector, one sub-inspector, eight head constables, and forty-nine constables, but there is little crime. The only heinous cases are homicides committed in drunken broils or in disputes about land. I have already adverted to the tenacity with which they cling to their right in the soil. They consider it inextinguishable. They utterly scorn the notion of being barred from re-entry by a statute of limitation. No amount of adverse possession, however undisturbed, could, according to their code, transfer to another their title to the land.

The large divisions of the Kandh hill country are called Maliahs, Malos, or Mals. These are sub-divided into groups of villages called Mutahs They recognise the authority of one chief over all the Mals, called Maha Mullik (malik ?). His position is that of the federal Abbaye previously described. The village headmen are called simply *maliks*. There is no mention of a Tribal *malik* or Abbaye.

Besides the indigenous Kandh headmen, each Mutah, and sometimes each large village, has an officer called Bisoi, who is always an Uriya. They were originally established as 'go-betweens' and interpreters between the Raja and the Kandhs ; they speak both languages and being well versed in Kandh customs, often obtain great influence. Of late years they have acquired lands by intrigue or purchase from the Kandhs who were better advised when they would not part with an inch of the soil to an alien.

The Pans : The low bastard Hindu people called Pans, already noticed as procurers for the Meriah sacrifices, are numerous in Boad. In the Chutia Nagpur tributary states this class is found, but are regarded both by Hindus and aborigines as vile. The Kandhs associate with them on a more equal footing, allowing them to hold lands and to share in the village festivals. They also ply their trade as weavers, and the poorest of them work as farm laborers, cultivating land belonging to Kandhs and making over to their landlords half the produce as rent.

Drinking : The Kandhs also tolerate Hindus of the Sundi (Sandika), or spirit distilling, caste, as, though inveterate drunkards, they cannot distill for themselves. Sundis are traders as well as distillers ;—a good deal of the trade of the country is in their hands, and some of them have accumulated considerable wealth.

The Kandh huts are built for the accomodation of the father, mother, and younger children only. At 8 to 11 years of age, boys and girls are ejected from the nest, and have to take up their abodes in their respective clubs till they marry and build nests for themselves.

Marriage customs : Female infanticide was not one of the sins of Boad, and the evil consequences of the system are not found there. The Boad Kandhs repudiate the notion of intermarriage with other races, and sexual selection is carried on in a rational manner. A man is not encouraged to indulge in matrimony till he has the means of supporting a wife in a house of his own ; when thus eligible he joins confidently in the village dances and makes his choice, and if fathers and mothers after **[300]** this make themselves disagreeable, they may look out for an elopement. The youg couple disappear and keep out of the way till the parents relent, and the price of the girl is accepted.

It would appear that most hill tribes have found it necessary to promote marriage by stimulating intercourse between the sexes at particular seasons of the year. Mr. Darwin would, perhaps, call this a reversion to the Balyen or love seasons of feathered ancestors. At one of the Kandh festivals held in November all the lads and lasses assemble for a spree, and a bachelor has then the privilege of making off with any unmarried girl whom he can induce to go with him, subject to a subsequent arrangement with the parents of the maiden.

The Kandhs are as fond of dancing as the Oraons, and like them have a dancing place in every village, surrounded by stones or wooden seats and shaded by venerable trees.

The instruments are drums, tambourines and a reed instrument with a sound like that of indifferent bag-pipe.

The performers of both sexes pay particular attention to their dress and to the arrangement of their hair. The ball dress when complete is apparently similar to that of the Oraons when similarly engaged.

Dances : In commencing the dance the girls form themselves into semi-circles of two rows. They stand close together, keeping their position by the touch only, as the hands are employed in holding the dress, which they occasionally extend by opening out their arms and as they do so waving the draperies and at the same time forming a long line instead of a semi-circle. As the excitement increases, the girls sing, the young men respond, and the movement becomes brisker until the whole breaks into a romp in which the girls pinch the boys and peck at them with their hands like the Juang girls when performing as vultures. In other respects the dance appears to be of the Bhuiya class.

The men have a separate war dance, armed to the teeth and decorated with red cloth and feathers. They divide into two parties, and a mimic fight takes place. One side gives way, the other pursues, a man falls ; he is set on by the opposite party and carried off in triumph as a fallen foe.

Another dance represents a bison hunt ; one man with the horns and skin of the animal takes to his heels followed by the remainder, who capture him after a brief chase, and bear him back as a trophy.

The cessation of internecine struggles, abolition of demoralising rites, and settlement to peaceful pursuits, have had a most salutary effect on the condition of the Kandhs. I quote descriptions of them before and after the cure.

Lieutenant J. P. Frye, writing of them in 1857, says—[120]

Dress : "Cloth being an article of very limited import, the use of dress is confined amongst all to the narrowest bounds admitted by decency. The Patro himself is distinguished by a species of robe of office, consisting of a red blanket with variously colored fringe, but the ordinary Kandh is more scantily clad than the Uriya, and his mode of dress more repulsive to decency, the only scrap of cloth worn being old and foul. The festival dress consists of a long **[301]** narrow slip of cloth with fringed ends worn so that the end hangs down like a tail. But the head-dress is the characteristic feature of a Kandh's vanity. The hair, which is worn very long, is drawn forward and rolled up till it looks like a horn projecting from between the eyes. Around this it is his delight to wear a piece of red cloth and insert the feathers of favorite birds, as also his pipe, comb, &c. On the western frontier cloth was unknown and strips of paper sufficed to procure fowls and rice. The clothing of the women is nearly as limited as that of the males. The bosom is invariably exposed, and a single cloth round the loins, scarcely reaching to the middle of the thigh, the sole garment."

Mr. Ravenshaw, writing in 1871, says :—"The Kandhs formerly possessed little property of any sort. A red cloth or a brass plate was rare. Now-a-days in most of the more respectable houses you see brass vessels in tolerable profusion. They have acquired considerable wealth in silver and brass ornaments, and where they formerly went half-starved and half-naked, they have now abundance of food and a liberal supply of raiment. Cultivation has extended, and they grow large quantities of cotton, oil seeds, and turmeric for export."

I learn further from Mr. Ravenshaw's notes that the Kandhs now manifest a desire for education and moral improvement. They propose to establish schools at their own expense, and agree to submit to any well-concerted measures for the suppression of drunkenness ; and they couple with this a petition for a recognised system of administration of justice through their own elders—a proposal which, in my opinion, should meet with every encouragement.

Disposal of the dead : The burial service of the Kandhs is not very impressive. The bodies are ordinarily burnt without ritual or ceremony,[121] but ten days after the death the friends of the deceased meet for a feast and console themselves with a bout of drinking. An Abbaye, however, is not so easily disposed of. When a man of this dignity dies, the event is proclaimed by the beating of drums and gongs, and thus summoned the heads of villages attend the funeral. The body is laid out in state on a funeral pyre, and near it a flag denotes where a large bag of grain and the personal effects are deposited. It is then fired, and the family and people of the village perform the funeral dance round the flag whilst the faggots are burning. The effects are then made over to the tribal Abbaye. The village priest, though present, takes no part in the ceremony. The dancing round the flag is continued at intervals till the tenth day, when there is a gathering of the tribe, and the succession of the heir is proclaimed.

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[120] *Journal, Royal Asiatic Society*, Part I., Vol. XVII, page 13.

[121] Macpherson, *Memorials of Service*, page 73.

[Page 302 to 304 of the original edition contained *Vocabularies of the tribes described in Group VIII.* In the present reprint this is put as *Appendix VI.*]

GROUP IX

THE ARYANS

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

[305] In many works on India, especially in Marshman's *History*, we are told that the original settlers, whose characteristics we have been describing in the foregoing pages, were driven from the plains by fresh colonies of immigrants, and these were in their turn conquered by the Hindus, who brought their religion and language with them from regions beyond the Indus, and having reduced the inhabitants to a servile condition *branded* them with the name of Sudra. I do not know on what authority the Sudras are thus treated as a distinct people, nor do we find that they ever were in fact reduced to a servile condition. Brahmans, in the pride of their self-exaltation, certainly flung hard words at them, and writing on stilts treated them as prostrate ; but it is reasonable to suppose that they were, from the very first, as they now are, the working bees of the hive, the bone and sinew of the nation, the real supporters of the whole fabric.

Professor H. H. Wilson, in his Essay, No. 2, 'On the religious practices of the Hindus', thus briefly describes the four castes,—first, the Brahmans whose duties were to study and teach the Vedas and to conduct the domestic worship of the next two classes ; second, the Kshatriya, the warrior and prince, whose duties were to fight and govern ; third, the Vaisya, the merchant and farmer ; fourth, the Sudras, who supplied artificers, laborers and servants to the other three. The Sudras were subjected to much indignity and injustice, but their condition was never so bad as that of the helot, the bondsman or the serf. They were free masters of their own property and at liberty to settle where they pleased. Intermarriage between all four castes took place, and the only check upon them was the degradation of the children. *They* were not even Sudras. They, therefore, formed new castes, distinguished according to their mixed descent and the occupations which came to be peculiarly their own.

A very large proportion of the Hindu population is, if the *Purans* are to be believed, the offspring of these mixed alliances. According to different authorities, the number of inferior castes so originated ranges from 30 to upwards of 40, and includes some of the most useful of the people, as carpenters, smiths, weavers, potters, fishermen, braziers. Strange to say, the caste called Chandala, vilest of all, whose chief duty is the removal of dead bodies, is sprung from the union of a Sudra male with a female of the Brahman caste. It was only in the event of their not obtaining service in the house of one of the **[306]** twice-born that a Sudra was permitted to practise a trade or profession, but there was no interdict against his engaging himself in agricultural pursuits either as proprietor, farmer, or mere cultivator.

The above mode of accounting for the varieties of classes is fanciful and nonsensical, but the object of the propounders of the idea was doubtless to preserve the purity of the upper classes by degrading the offspring of those who married beneath them, and it pre-supposes the point I argue for, that the upper and lower castes of the Hindu population do not spring from different stocks.

An intelligent native friend of mine gives me the following as an old tradition preserved in the *Mahabharata* :—

"There is no virtual distinction of castes ; all were Brahmans, so men were created, but different trades and professions produced the different classes."

In the *Vayu Purana* there is a somewhat similar passage.[1] In speaking of the Treta age the author says there were then no castes, orders, varieties of condition or mixture of castes ; they were alike in form and age without distinction of lower and higher.

It appears to me necessary, to a proper understanding of the ancient Hindu population or constitution of the Aryan people established in India, to treat all four castes as originally homogeneous, but divided into two great classes, the pastoral and agricultural, and we have in the present day the type of these two classes in the two most numerous of the Hindu castes, the Gopas or Goalas, and the Kurmis.

They formed the raw material on which Brahman and Buddhist priests and reformers successively worked ; the horizon from which the other classes arose or fell. It is obvious that Brahmans, Kshatriyas and Vaisyas, each strictly following the position assigned to them, could not from their very constitution have had separate or distinct national existence. Isolated they would have been as *disjecta membra*, wanting a stomach and digestive organs.

It was on the other hand necessary to the existence and progress of the pastoral and agricultural tribes that they should have their warriors, a section of the population devoted to the profession of arms, who fought the aborigines, and defended the new colonies, and it is probable that having this duty exclusively assigned to them they were exempted from the labor of tillage or care of the flocks and herds, and thus was formed the military class or Kshatriyas ; and it appears very natural that this class, thus privileged, should become dominant and monopolize the ruling power, and gradually arrogate to themselves a separate and nobler descent than that of the tillers of the soil.

Great numbers of the agricultural tribes have traditions that they too were once Kshatriyas, or might have been, but preferring the plough to the sword, were obliged to give up the distinction of wearing the thread, the emblem of the twice-born.

In regard to the Brahmans, there is nothing that I know of to militate against the theory that they were eliminated in a similar way ; but it is highly probable that the Rishis or Munis, the magi or sages, from whom they claim descent, were of different origin, probably Egyptian, and that the doctrines eventually enunciated and adopted by the **[307]** Aryans were derived from two or more distinct sources. Some of the Rishis[2] appear to have been established in India as missionaries to the primitive inhabitants long before its conquest by the Aryans. These holy sages are frequently spoken of as occupying hermitages far in advance of the Aryan settlements in the midst of the wild Rakshasas or Dasyus. Some they succeeded in converting, others resisted and reviled them, but the sages, miraculously supported or aided, held their ground. The connection of the old Rishis with the aborigines may be referred to in the following passage from the story of Nahusha,[3] as told in the *Mahabharata*,—"This energetic prince slew the hosts of the Dasyus and compelled the Rishis to pay tribute." But the old Rishis, whatever may have been their origin, formed alliances with Aryan girls without regard to caste. The sage Vyasa, compiler of the *Vedas*, was the son of a Kaibartini, that is, a fisherman's daughter, whom his father, a Rishi, had married, and the offspring of such alliances might be priests, warriors, princes, or anything else. Tod, in his *Annals of Rajasthan*, tells us that in the early ages of the Solar and Lunar dynasties, from which the Brahmans and Kshatriyas spring, the priestly office was not hereditary in families ; it was a profession, and the genealogies exhibit frequent instances of branches of these races terminating their martial career, abandoning the world, and starting a religious sect, and their descendants sometimes continued in the priestly office, and sometimes reverted to the profession of arms ; but after the conclusion of the struggles between the two lines described in the *Ramayana*, the military class appears to have withdrawn from all desire to enter the priesthood. Thus in those days there was no hereditary priesthood. The priestly offices were held by men told off or called to the work who were required or inspired to live for years a life of meditation or seclusion as a preparation for the avocation.

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[1] Quoted in Muir's *Original Sanskrit Texts.* Vol. I, page 29.

[2] The sage Gautama (Muir's *Original Sanskrit Texts*, Vol. II, page 382) is described in the *Mahabhrata* as having become like the Dasyus from living amongst them.

Like the priests of the Roman Church in the middle ages, they were the repositories of all the lore of the age, and having the power, they freely used it to twist and distort the annals of the people and the records of their faith into instruments of glorification of their own class, till they gradually obtained for themselves recognition as a separately and divinely begotten, heavenly inspired race entitled to adoration.

For the production of the professional castes, it is not necessary to have recourse to interdicted alliances. Amongst primitive people, the children naturally take to the trade of their father, and we need go no further to account for such tribes or castes as oil-pressers, potters, boatmen, gold-washers, fishermen, &c.

Thus we may expect to find, and do find, a certain uniformity of feature pervading all the Natives of Hindustan who may be classed amongst the four great divisions into which the Hindus are divided and their off-shoots, with physical and moral characteristics of one prevailing mould. There is, on the whole, in Hindus of pure blood a very marked conservation of beauty of features of the Aryan type. We certainly see great variety, sometimes startling variety, of complexion, not unfrequently unmistakable evidence of mixture of races, and in some classes, as a whole, less delicacy of feature and form than in others. This is to be expected. The outdoor, rough employment of some renders them dark and coarse, when compared with others who are subjected to no [308] exposure or severe manual labor ; but amongst the hard-worked Kurmis may be seen occasionally maidens and youths with all the delicacy of feature, beauty of form, and fairness of complexion, that are more especially the attributes of the twice-born, and I have seen amongst Goala girls worthy representatives of the pretty milkmaids, amongst whom the amorous Krishna passed so much of his time.

I do not doubt that the Aryans had their helots, and I consider that we have in the really servile castes 'the Chandalas, lowest of men,' Pariahs, Doms, and others, the people to whom, from time immemorial, the vilest offices have been assigned, and who so seldom rise from their abject condition, the descendants of those very helots ; but I find no reason for the assertion that the progenitors of the modern Sudras were helots. Manu, the great propounder of Brahman supremacy, indeed, proclaimed that the Sudras were to serve the other three classes, but no degrading offices were imposed on them, and the service was optional. It was the mass of the people they thus attempted to depress ; morally they succeeded in the influence they obtained. The Sudras became priest-ridden, and were domineered over by Kshatriyas, but though bullied, they were never enslaved.

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[3] Muir's *Original Sanskrit Texts*, Vol. I. page 67,

Neither do I find any evidence of their being a conquered race. The terms applied to the Sudras, though purposely humiliating, are very different from the epithets of bitter resentment that are launched by the bards and hymn writers against the Dasyus, who, from the description[4] given, are obviously the dark-skinned aborigines who had the audacity to defend themselves against the Aryans. In one of the oldest Vedic accounts of the origin of castes, it is stated that the Sudras were created by Brahma as "the nourishers," a good name for those to whose labour the earth yielded her riches for the benefit of all classes.

The condition of the *four* castes, when created by Brahma, is thus described in the first book of the *Vishnu Purana* (Wilson's translation).—'They abode wherever they pleased. They were free from every impediment, pure hearted, and blameless in every observance.'

The province of Chutia Nagpur protected from invasion by its elevation, and the natural barriers that surround it, afforded an asylum to the ancient ·races, in which they long existed as a dominant people, maintaining their independence for ages after the subjugation or expulsion of their congeners from the Gangetic provinces. It was one of the last countries in which the Aryans obtained a footing : their intrusion is indeed so recent that the struggle for supremacy between the two races is even now going on. The Aryans are still regarded as foreigners, and in some parts of the country, as in the Kolhan of Singbhum, never allowed to forget that they are intruders, but in other parts the aborigines show a tendency to give way to them.

Here then we have a glimpse of the process long since worked out elsewhere. We see the two races in juxtaposition yet opposed. The moral and physical distinctions between them are, as a rule, most marked, and they naturally divide themselves into only two nationalities. For the Hindus there is only one general term—Sud, or Sudh, or Sudhan, which includes all castes, Brahmans, Rajputs, Goalas, Kurmis, Kahars, &c., and they distinguish themselves by that term, which means pure, when differencing themselves from the aborigines, whom they call Kol, vile or impure, or Chuar, robber. **[309]** The Kols quietly accepted the distinctive denomination. Uniting in themselves a Dravidian and Kolarian element (the Oraons and Mundas), they were in want of a generic term to distinguish them from the Sudhs, but to the latter they also apply the epithet 'Diku', a word of uncertain meaning, but not intended to be complimentary.

The word Sudra is, I doubt not, from the same Sanskrit root as *Sud*, meaning 'to purify'. If the Sudras had always been regarded as a helot race born to a servile condition, why should this honourable epithet have been applied to them ? I think it was of old, what it is now in Chutia Nagpur, the term by which the Aryans *en masse* chose to distinguish themselves from the

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[4] See quotation from the *Vrihad Aranyaka Upanishad* of the *Yajur Veda* ; in Muir's *Original Sanskrit Texts* Vol. 1, page 13.

Dasyus or Kols or Mlechchas. They were all "the pure people", but the twice-born, the first three classes, were the lords, spiritual and temporal, and the knights and burgesses. The fourth class were the ordinary people.

The three upper classes were under very strict obligations to qualify themselves for the maintenance of the superiority assigned to them by birth. It was incumbent on every male of those classes to pass the first stage of his life as a religious student, and it is declared that a twice-born, whether Brahman, Kshatriya, or Vaisya, who has not studied the *Vedas*, falls, even whilst living, into the condition of a Sudra, and his descendants after him ; but a Vaisya of the present day studies only his ledgers, and the representatives of the military classes are, as a rule, as innocent of literature as were the knights of the middle ages.

SECTION 1

BRAHMANS

The mysterious Rishis or Munis above alluded to appear to be the first persons to whom the name of Brahman was applied. They were the light of their age, and are supposed still to shine on us, as the seven great stars of the Great Bear. They were anchorites of great reputed sanctity, but judging from the highly-coloured anecdotes of their private life that are handed down to us, of very questionable moral character. Many of them were of the royal blood of the solar line ; but though they lived as ascetics, they did not consider continency or celibacy as essential to their condition. Their *liaisons* included maidens of high and low degree, goddesses and nymphs, princesses, and fishermen's daughters, and the greatest monarchs were glad to bestow their daughters upon them. They became thus the most noble ancestry that an Indian family could claim descent from, and from their reputed progeny the Brahmans were started as a hereditary priesthood.

The creation of three privileged classes instead of one was no doubt a device to reconcile the 'upper ten thousand' generally to the innovation.

The ceremonial ritual, subsequently promulgated as Brahmanical, lays down rules of daily routine for the guidance of the twice-born, which are only adapted to a people who had settled permanently in a tropical climate. They inculcate constant ablutions involving a protracted immersion of a part of the body in cold water, whilst long recitations are made that would be intolerable in a cold climate ; in some cases very light clothing is enjoined, and in all temperance in food and abstinence from strong drink.

It must be allowed that if Brahmans elevated their caste by writing down the lower classes, they did not assign to themselves very easy duties. A Brahman should **[310]** study hard in his youth, and practise austerity and devotion during the remainder of his existence. His life is passed, if he acts up to the ritual enjoined, in the performance of prescribed ceremonies and religious duties of a singularly monotonous and uninteresting character. From the moment of his awaking at earliest dawn, till he retires at night, there is a rule not only for every action of his life, but even for his thoughts and meditations. These will be found detailed in the pages of Wilson and Colebrooke,[5] and in the *Purans*. They are too prolix and numerous to be treated of here.

The Brahmans of Bengal are descended[6] from five priests invited from Kanyakubja by Adisura, King of Gaura, who is said to have reigned in A.D. 1077. They are therefore of comparatively recent importation, and the priestly duties were previously in the hands of Sudras. In the eastern province of Asam, the ancient Kamarupa, there are still large and very ancient religious establishments presided over by Sudra priests, and there are others the head priests of which were of the same order till within the last century, but into which Brahmans have now insinuated themselves. The names of the five imported priests were Bhatta Narayana, of the family of Sandilya ; Daxa, of the family of Kasyapa ; Chhandara, of the family of Vatsa ; Sriharsha, of the family of Bharadwaja ; and Vedagarbha, of the family of Savarni.

At the period when these priests were invited by the King of Gaura, some seven hundred inferior Brahmans, called from their number Saptasati, and a few Vaidicas resided in Bengal. Of the former, none are now found in that country ; five families of the Vaidicas are extant, but are not permitted to intermarry with the Brahmans of Rarna.[7]

Many of the Brahmans of Lower Bengal have assiduously cultivated the decidedly superior ability that their class may lay claim to, and, well educated and enlightened, fill with credit important offices under Government, or attain high positions as merchants or traders. The Brahmans also include a numerous body of industrious and energetic farmers and cultivators. They engage in all the operations of agriculture except that of holding the plough, and support themselves creditably by honest labor.

The Brahmans of the present day, who devote themselves exclusively to priestly duties, are far out-numbered by those who have taken to secular pursuits. The most ignorant amongst the former are usually the most bigoted and assuming, and I think there are no more intolerant and offensive members of the class than may be found in Bihar and Chutia Nagpur. There we find men who with but little or no knowledge of their books or duties arrogate adoration of their miserable persons by all classes. These men will enter into familiar conversation with an acquaintance in a public place, and continue to talk and smile as if they were entirely regardless of the necessity they were under of having at the same time frequently to withdraw the foot from the slipper in order that the passers-by might have the opportunity of kissing it !

I do not wish to disparage Brahmans ; they are unquestionably physically and mentally a fine race of men, and considering the false position their pretensions place **[311]** them in, and the natural repugnance they must feel to descend to the level of ordinary mortals, it is all the more creditable to the class that so many amongst them have given up this masquerading as gods, and appear before the world as enlightened and useful members of society.

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[5] See *Vishnu Purana*, Book III, Chapter II, &c. Colebrooke, page 77.

[6] Colebrooke, p. 277.

[7] Country east of the Bhagirathi.

SECTION—2

RAJPUTS, OR KSHATRIYAS

The pretensions of the Rajputs of the day to represent the Kshatriyas of days gone by are not generally allowed by Brahmanical writers, many of whom maintain that the Kshatriyas were destroyed by Parasurama ; but this fable of the total annihilation of the race is contradicted by the very writers that assert it, and I doubt not that many noble families of Rajputs scattered throughout India have as much right to consider themselves truly scions of the great Lunar race as the Brahmans have to claim descent from the saints of the Solar line, but there are many noble and respectable families now admitted into the fraternity of the Rajputs, and calling themselves Kshatriyas, who have very little Aryan blood in their veins. It is a fact that many *rajas* and chiefs, who are invested by Brahmans in due form at the proper age with the sacred string, and who may show you a pedigree proclaiming their descent through fifty generations from a Rishi, or a cow, or a snake, or some other animal or thing, are Kols, or Bhuiyas, or Gonds.

The Rajputs, under the Bengal Government, are chiefly to be found in Bihar. Buchanan, in his account of that district,[8] estimates them at 14,000 families, and enumerates 34 tribes ; this nearly equals the number given by Tod in his account of the tribes of Rajasthan, and amongst the names that may be found in both lists are Chauhans, Rahtors, Chandel, Baghel, Bayis, &c. To these Chutia Nagpur adds Nagbangsis, Sikhar, Raksel, and others, who are acknowledged as good Rajput families and intermarry with the best ; though, with the exception of the Raksel, I do not think that any of them trace their descent out of the province.

Very good specimens of country gentlemen may be found amongst the Rajput landlords of Western Bengal. Where, as is sometimes the case, primogeniture is the local custom or family usage, and estates have been long in the family, the best relations generally exist between the landlord and the peasantry ; indeed it will be found that a very indifferent landlord is, in such estates, more respected and beloved than the most indulgent new man. Good or bad, they live amongst their people 'like a fine old English gentleman, all of the olden time.' They may fleece the tenants sometimes when they levy contributions for marriages, or to reimburse themselves for some act of needless extravagance, but in whatever tends to the dignity of the family, the people deem themselves personally concerned and give without demur, and it is a satisfaction to them when the duties of hospitality are religiously observed by their chiefs. The objects of their charity are often the reverse of worthy, but still 'the poor seldom pass unrelieved from their gates.'

The class of Native gentlemen that I speak of are not the inert sensualists that wealthy Bengalis so often become ; they are fully capable of enjoying field sports ; they generally ride well, are good shots and keen sportsmen. They are sure to have a [312] good battery of guns by the best English makers, good horses, dogs, elephants, and hawks, and even fishing tackle. As already remarked, a Rajput claiming to be one of the twice-born is bound to study the *Vedas*, and to perform most of the religious duties that are enjoined on Brahmans. I know some Rajput gentlemen who, acting up to the *Brahmans* or sacred precepts, spend a great part of the day in devotion, such as it is, but the Brahmans are after all the most indulgent and accommodating of religious guides. Any Rajput gentleman who finds the observances prescribed tedious or irksome *may hire a Brahman to do it all for him.* The Rajput may be shooting or hawking whilst it goes on,—the result is the same so far as his spiritual welfare is concerned.

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[8] Buchanan, Vol. I., p. 159.

I have said the rites of hospitality are considered a sacred duty. The guest, of all others, who is received with most distinction in the house of a noble Hindu is a bridegroom. He is treated with divine honors. Any visitor that the *raja* wishes very particularly to distinguish is received in somewhat similar fashion. He is met at some distance on the road by the host and escorted to the castle or house preceded by musicians, attended by a well-dressed suite, bearing silver sticks and other insignia of the host's rank, and flanked and followed by armed men, horse and foot ; the latter with long matchlocks, which they discharge *ad libitum.* As the cavalcade reaches the castle, there issues from a side gate a procession of females in saffron-coloured garments bearing lights, water, and unguents. They precede the guest into the castle, and tender their services to wash his feet. This truly oriental attention may often be met with in the south-west frontier districts of Bengal. It is practised by all classes of the people. Once, in passing by the house of a wealthy Goala, I was invited by the owner to enter. A chair was placed for me in a veranda of the inner court, and the females of the family summoned. They came with water in a flat brass vessel and turmeric. They looked aghast at my boots, and were proceeding to operate on the leather, when I told them to remove the obstacle ; they did so, and having fairly accomplished their devoir, they tried to restore the hose to its place, but failing in this, they got frightened and fled.

VAISYAS

Whatever may have been originally the occupation of the third class, the Vaisyas, those who now claim to belong to it, are nearly all merchants and traders. The Agarwals, Oswals and some Banias are of this class, but they are for the most part foreigners in Bengal. They leave their homes in Western India early in life, and return to them when they have made their fortunes. In Bengal Proper it is doubtful if there be any true Vaisyas domiciled. The mercantile class are either Brahmans, who enter largely into it, Chatris or Rajputs, and numerous Sahus, Modis and Banias who are of various inferior castes.

SECTION 3

THE KAYASTHS

I believe that in the present day the Kayasths arrogate to themselves the position of first amongst commoners, or first of the Sudras, but their origin is involved in some mystery. No one appears to know much about them, the sacred writers and bards make no mention of such a class, and they have not, that I can hear of, any annals of their own. They say they came into Bengal in the train of the Brahmans from Kanauj [313] introduced by Adisura, but this does not account for their origin. The fact seems to be that as organized systems of Government were established, a demand for a new class of scriveners arose with duties that neither Brahmans nor Vaisyas had time, or thought it consistent with their dignity, to attend to, and a fresh dive was made into the great Sudra element and a new order eliminated. Intelligent Kayasths make no pretensions to be other than Sudras. From their appearance we might say that the first selection was made of people with weak bodies and strong intellect, of small courage, but great cunning, and that physical beauty was of less consequence than sharpness of wit. However they worked their way out of obscurity, and are now boldly in the foreground as a well defined and very influential class. They are largely employed as clerks in Government offices, and attain to much higher official positions ; they supply accountants to the landed gentry, and the Native bar opens a wide field for their peculiar talents. The potent pen which has thus elevated them is their favorite object of worship. The festival of Sripanchami observed by most learned Hindus in honor or Saraswati, the goddess of learning, is especially celebrated by Kayasths. Pens and ink-stands are collected,cleaned and arranged, strewn with flowers and barley blades, and there must be no writing on that day except with chalk. A puny Kayasth will shake the pen, thus honored, in the face of a club-bearing athlete or staff-bearing police man, and declare, often with truth, that he is armed with a more effective weapon than either of them.

Having established themselves as a distinct class, the Kayasths looked about for a new pedigree and found one that was vacant at the time, and suited them exactly.

When Yama sits in judgment on the dead, Lala Chitragupta turns over the pages of the register in which the good and bad deeds of men are recorded by him. This worthy the Kayasths selected as their ancestor. He had several sons from whom the different tribes of Kayasths derived their origin.

1. Sribastab.
2. Ambashtha.
3. Karan.
4. Bhattanagar.
5. Gaura.
6. Valmika.
7. Mathur.
8. Saksena.
9. Aithana.
10. Kulasreshtha.
11. Nijam.
12. Suradhwaja.

Some interested authorities wishing to extricate the caste from the degradation of belonging to the fourth class, declare that Chitragupta or Chitra Sen was created from the dust that covered the body of Brahma. Others maintain that Chitra was the son of Bhuttidatta, created especially as chief of the Sudras. The book called the *Rudrayamal* states that the Ambashthas, who in Bihar are the most numerous class are not pure Sudras, but were born of a Vaisya mother by a Brahman father. The Ambashthas first appeared in Magadha. Next to them, in numbers, are the Sribastab, who are said to have first appeared in Tirhut.

The Maitis or Mahantis of Singbhum and Orissa are Karanas.

The Kayasths wish to be considered orthodox Hindus, and in their mode of life and observance of rites and ceremonies follow pretty closely the injunctions of the *Purans*. In marriages, in funeral ceremonies and the adoration paid to the dead, they are strict observers of Brahmanical doctrines, and perhaps there is no class more antagonistic to widow marriage than they are, but they are much addicted to ardent spirits. I know of no caste of Hindu which more openly and freely indulges in intoxicating beverages.

SECTION 4

PASTORAL TRIBES. THE GOPAS.

[314] I believe all the authorities are agreed in assigning to the Gopas a high place amongst Sudras, though there may be a difference of opinion as to whether all the tribes of the pastoral family are entitled to so honorable a position.

In ranking the Gopas, their intimate connection with their Hero and God Krishna is allowed to have its weight. Originally a cow-herd himself, he rose to be chief of the pastoral race and his history is theirs. Wheeler, in his delightful analysis of the *Mahabharata*, thus epitomizes it ; "He, Krishna, appears to have belonged to a tribe well known in Hindu History as the Yadavas, or descendants of Yadu. These Yadavas were a nomadic race who grazed cattle and made butter, and occasionally migrated to different places accompanied by their cows and waggons. The time and circumstances under which they first entered Hindustan are alike unknown. At the birth of Krishna they appear to have settled in the neighbourhood of the city of Mathura, the modern Muttra, about 120 miles to the south of Hastinapur."

Of the Ahirs or Gopas who were the companions of the youth of Krishna at Mathura we have various accounts.

It is contended by some authorities that they were Vaisyas, who were degraded in consequence of having introduced castration amongst their herds,[9] but the *Brahma Vaivarta Puran* makes out the whole group that sported in Brindaban to have been gods and goddesses out masquerading.

According to this authority the immortal Radha had, by a curse, been condemned to a sojourn on earth as a maid of Brindaban, and Krishna to console her came into the world in mortal form as her lover.

This was the main object of his incarnation, but the other gods implored him not to lose the opportunity of laboring in his divine capacity for the moral elevation of mankind, so he divided his time between preaching and love-making.

Immense numbers of Ahirs or Gopas still cling to the nomadic life of their ancestors. Seeking the high grazing grounds of Central India and Western Bengal they form encampments on the pasture lands where they reside with their wives, families, and herds till the grass in the neighbourhood is exhausted, subsisting entirely on the proceeds of their milk and butter. The houses they use are constructed of large bamboo mats ; they can be taken to pieces and removed like tents.

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[9] Buchanan, Vol. I. p. 169.

But a still larger section of the tribe have quite given up this wandering life, and forming permanent villages have settled down as good farmers and cultivators, only distinguishable from other agriculturists by a possession of larger herds of cattle, by the greater care bestowed on them and in profiting more by the sale of butter and milk.

The religiyus festivals observed by the Gopas are chiefly those in honor of their god and hero Krishna.[10] Professor H. H. Wilson describing the Doljatra which begins in the fourteenth day of the light half of Phalgun, or about the middle of March, when the image of Krishna is put into a swing at dawn, noonday and sunset, says, "the caste of Gopas or cowherds is everywhere prominently conspicuous in this ceremony, especially so amongst the Uriyas, and at the Doljatra or Holi they not only renew their own [315] garments but all the harness and equipments of their cattle. They also bathe them and paint their foreheads with sandal and turmeric."

"They themselves collect in parties each under a leader or choroegus whom they follow through the streets singing and dancing and leaping, as if wild with joy. A curious part of their proceedings suggesting analogies, possibly accidental with some obsolete usages amongst ourselves, is their being armed with slender wands, and as they go along the leader every now and then halts, and turns round to his followers and the whole clatter their wands together for an instant or two, when they resume their route repeating their vociferations and songs chiefly in praise of Krishna, or in commemoration of his juvenile pastimes." The Holi is not always exclusively connected with Krishna. There are different legends concerning a witch so called, who is burned in effigy during the festival ; but one of them is, that she presented herself as a nurse to Krishna with poisoned nipples to destroy him, but he knowing her malignant intention nevertheless applied his lips to the venom, and sucked till the whole substance and the vitality of the witch was absorbed to her utter destruction and the infant's benefit.

We have a very large Goala population in parts of Singbhum and the adjoining Tributary Mahals of Katak and Chutia Nagpur, especially in Keonjhar. They do not appear to have any particular legend to account for their being where they now hold rather a subordinate position, the Bhuiyas or Kols being the dominant races ; but they are, on the whole, the most flourishing of the peasantry in that part of the country.

They are not all of one family, and do not profess to be all of one race. Those that call themselves Mathurabasis claim to be pure Gopas, and are fond of making pilgrimages to Brindaban. They are the handsomest and most truly Aryan looking of the lot. The Magadha Goalas have a much commoner appearance. The latter are suspiciously like Kols.

The features of the Mathurabasis are high, sharp and delicate, and they are of light-brown complexion. The Magadha features are undefined and coarse, and they are dark complexioned, and have large hands and feet. Seeing the latter standing in a group with some Singbhum Kols, there is no distinguishing one from the other. There has, doubtless, been much mixture of blood.

In every Kol village there are a few of these Goalas who look after the Kol cattle and are paid for doing it. They thus hold a very subordinate position, but the Mathurabasis never stoop to this. They are found as extensive farmers, employing a number of aborigines as *Kamias* or farm laborers, and it is astonishing how easily they succeed in seducing Kols from their independent position as peasant proprietors to become their servants. They do not however forsake their hereditary calling ; they keep large herds of buffaloes and cows, and freely sell the milk and butter, the latter in the form of *ghee*. They live very generally in village cammunities and have their hereditary village headman, who with a council of village elders decides all questions of caste. They claim amongst other things the right of disposing of widows, but are now seldom permitted to exercise it.

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[10] *Essays on Religion of the Hindus*. Vol. II. page 226.

I am indebted to Babu Rakhal Das Haldar, Assistant Commissioner, for the following account of Sadgops who may be regarded as at the head of the Gopas of Bengal.

[316] The Sadgops, literally superior Goalas, are now more an agricultural than a pastoral caste ; but whatever predilection other agricultural castes may have for the worship of Rama, the Sadgops are not peculiarly attached to that divinity. They devote themselves more particularly to Krishna like other Goalas, but this is a common case with all the castes now known as Sudras. Krishna's religion is the most actively proselytizing form of Hinduism now existing, and it is absorbing gradually all the castes, aboriginal, Aryan, and mixed. If, therefore, it be a fact that the agricultural tribes are found to be peculiarly devoted to Rama and the pastoral tribes to Krishna, that distinction will soon cease to exist, as evidently Rama's religion and all other forms of Hinduism are on the decline.

The Sadgops, like every other Sudra caste, are impure on account of child birth for one month, not ten days as is the case with the Brahmans. They are impure for the same period after a death in the family. They do not perform the three important rites which constitute the second birth of the Brahman, Kshatriya and Vaisya, viz., the (1) *Karna bedha*, or piercing of the ear, (2) *chura karana*, or tonsure, (3) *upanayana*, or investiture with the thread.

In weddings the following ceremonies are gone through :—

1. *Gayehalud*,—anointing the *var* or bridegroom, with turmeric, two or three days previous to the wedding.
2. *Jalsawa*,—ceremonious drawing of water by village girls for the *var's* bath.
3. *Adhibas*,—a tray in which samples of 22 articles in common use are placed is presented to the *var* by being made to touch his forehead, and the same time a bunch of *dub* grass is tied to his wrist.
4. *Nandimukh*,—sacrifice to deceased ancestors.
5. *Snan*,—ceremonious bathing of the *var*, in a space *ch'haonitala*, enclosed by four plantain trees with the water obtained by *jalsawa*.
6. *Baran*,—the forehead of the *var* is touched with betel leaves, a winnowing fan, &c.
7. *Kanakanjali*,—address of his mother to him at parting, when she asks, "where are you going, my son," and he replies "to bring you a maid servant (or slave), mother !"

The bride in her own house has to go through the ceremonies 1 to 6.

When the *var* enters the bride's house, he is received by the village barber, who throws on him sugar and rice, and the *var* then takes his seat for a time in the assembly room, and converses with the young men, whilst the pandits in loud tones wrangle on questions concerning their laws or ritual, The *var* is then taken inside and stands within the *ch'haonitala*, whilst five or six married women walk round him seven times bearing the *adhibas* tray, a pitcher of water, &c. The bride is brought in on a tray and carried round the *vdr* seven times, after which the *subhadristi*, auspicious interview, is permitted, that is the bride and *var* look at each other, often for the first time.

They are then both taken to the place where the guests and the pandits are assembled, and the ceremony proceeds. The bride's father performs adoration of the *var*, whilst he says "I give away my daughter to you." The *var* and bride are made to say to each other, "What is my body is thine, what is thy body is mine", and they exchange flower [317] garlands. The *var* then touches the bride's forehead with the *sindur*, or red lead, which apparently completes the ceremony.

The *var* must now re-enter the female apartment, where he is subjected to much banter by the female friends of the bride, which he must bear as best he can Great liberty of speech is allowed on this occasion, and the jokes that are made and the songs that are sung, are not always very delicate. The bride is now taken to her future home, where other ceremonies await the couple, which are of little interest and need not be detailed.

Gareris or Shepherds : The Gareris, or shepherd tribe, are in dignity of caste in much the same position as the Gops. In the west of India, they founded a dynasty, that of Holkar, which still flourishes. They tend sheep and make blankets from their wool—a bad conjunction of trades, as the poor sheep are invariably shorn when blankets are in most request.

SECTION—5

AGRICULTURAL TRIBES—THE KURMIS, KOLITAS, AND AGHAREAHS

The Kurmis

It is probable that in the Kurmis we have the descendants of some of the earliest of the Aryan colonists of Bengal. Tradition, at all events, assigns to them a very ancient place in the country, and many antiquities, now concealed in dense jungle or rising as monuments of the civilization of bygone days amidst the huts of half-savage races now occupying the sites, are ascribed to them and attest the advance they had made in civilization at a very early period.

In his account[11] of Gorakhpur, Buchanan gives the Kurmis a high position amongst Hindus of the Sudra caste. A Kurmi zamindar is spoken of, the proprietor of Paraona, who had obtained the title of Raja from Asaf-ud-Daulah, but was obliged to resign it, as it gave offence to the older Barons, the proud Rajputs of the district. The family are nevertheless deemed noble, and it would be considered a breach of their privilege, if any of them were seen at the tail of a plough. There are tribes called Saithawar and Patanawar, who having attained or aspiring to a similar position, dislike being called Kurmis. In Southern India this tribe is most commonly called Kumni or Kunbi.

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[11] Page 468,

Mr. Campbell in his *Ethnology of India*[12] says, the Kurmis are numerous in the central and eastern parts of the North-Western Provinces, where they are well known as a very industrious class of cultivators, and he traces them from the Lower Duab to the Jabalpur and Sagar territories along both sides of the Narbada and in Malwa. Farther west in Gujrat they form the main body of the best cultivating population, and throughout the whole of the Mahratta country. In short, if they were all told, they would be found to be the most numerous of all the castes in India.

Kurmis in Chutia Nagpur : In the province of Chutia Nagpur the ancestors of the people now called Kurmis appear to have obtained a footing among the aboriginal tribes at a very remote period, and in more than one part of Manbhum have supplanted them. There are traditions of struggles between them and the Kolarian aborigines of these regions, and though the latter generally managed to hold their own, we find in some places Kurmi villages established on sites which we know from the groups **[318]** of rude stone pillars or cenotaphs still conspicuous were once occupied by Bhumij or Mundas, and in others vestiges of ruined temples appertaining to Hindu and Jain settlements, both most likely belonging to successive generations of Kurmis, amidst villages that have for ages been occupied by Bhumij.

Origin of the family of the Raja of Pachet : The Kurmis settled in the western part of Manbhum told me they had been there for fifty-two generations. The Pachet Raja claims just so many descents from the deserted child that is said to have founded his race. A babe was discovered in the woods by the Kurmis drawing its nourishment from a cow. This they took and brought up, and afterwards adopted as their Raja. As the family cannot trace back its origin rationally out of the district, and there is no particular reason for supposing them to be Bhumij or Munda, I think that they are more likely to be of Kurmi extraction than descended from the cow nurtured foundling, but they prefer the latter origin and are welcome to it. There are other high families of Kurmi origin. Sindiah is the descendant of a Kurmi Patel of Satara, and the celebrated Bhonsla family were originally Patels of Deori, and also, I believe, Kurmis.

In Gorakhpur, Shahabad, and Bihar, Buchanan reckoned 66,333 families of Kurmis, but they are numerous in most of the districts of Bengal. In the Central Provinces[13] they have Jhari Kunbis, or Kunbis of the woods, who were probably the persons who first cleared those woods, and Mahratta Kunbis, descendants of the followers of Raghuji I., who came with him from Berar and the Deccan.

Though the Kurmis include so many noble families, their social position in Bengal Proper is not high. They are not even *Jala-charaniya*, or a tribe from whose hands a Hindu of the higher castes would drink water, but in Bihar this honor is accorded to them.[14]

The social customs and religious observances of Kurmis vary much in different districts. When they are found in common tenancy with non-Aryan tribes, they conform to many usages which they must have acquired from the latter, and, following their example, swerve considerably from orthodox Hindu practices.

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[12] *Journal, Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Special Number, 1866, page 92.

[13] Settlement report published by Government,

[14] I am indebted to Babu Rakhal Das Haldar, Assistant Commissioner, for most of this information regarding Kurmis of Bengal.

The Kurmis employ Brahmans as priests in all ceremonies except marriages. A Kurmi can marry at any age and have as many wives as he fancies, and can also divorce a wife at pleasure.

The brides may be infants or adult girls. Widows may marry again. A married woman wears an iron ring on her wrist, the removal of which by the husband proclaims her divorced and free to take another.

Marriage customs : In the marriage arrangements and ceremonies of the Kurmis and other Sudra castes, there are several practices which are not found in the ritual enjoined by the *Purans*, but may be traced in the ceremonies followed by the aboriginal tribes, and there is besides a certain amount of fiction introduced, much of which appears to point to some period when the circumstances of the people were very different from what they are at present.

[319] The bridal parties amongst the aboriginal tribes often meet in hostile array at the entrance of the village of the bride, and a mimic fight takes place before the bride-groom's party is permitted to enter, and this custom is followed by some Kurmis and other Hindu castes.

After proposals have been made and accepted a ceremony called *Duar Khanda* is performed, which appears to be then rather superfluous. Seven or eight of the bridegroom's friends and relations go to the bride's house, and appear there and are received there as strangers come from afar. They are asked who they are and where they come from and for what purpose. They in reply describe themselves as travellers overtaken in a storm, giving fictitious names. They are hospitably treated, and in the more primitive parts the women bring water and turmeric and wash their feet. Before they take leave they ask to see the young daughter of the house of whose beauty they have heard so much. The bride is thus inspected and the party return with their report to the *var* or bridegroom. Then on behalf of the bride, or to gratify her curiosity, a similar visit is paid to the *var* by a party of her friends.

The wedding day is now fixed, and till it takes place, the bride and bridegroom are in their respective abodes subjected to daily ablutions in a somewhat public and ceremonious manner. On the wedding morning, the *var* is first married to a mango tree. He embraces the tree, is for a time tied to it in a particular manner with a thread, and he daubs it with red lead. Then the thread is removed from the tree, and is used to attach some of the leaves to the *var's* wrist. The *var* now takes an affectionate leave of his mother. The form of speech that passes between them is used on like occasions by all Hindus. She says, "Where art thou going, my son ?" "To bring thee a maid servant," is the dutiful and often over-true reply.

However short the distance may be from the *var's* to the bride's house, if they live next door to each other, there is always a fiction of a long journey having to be undertaken to reach it, and it is usual for the *var* to be carried to his destination seated on a covered platform borne on men's shoulders, which is called the *jahaz*, *i.e.*, ship.

Although a bridegroom is amongst Hindus always treated with great respect, it is customary with the Kurmis for the brethren of the bride to treat the *var* somewhat roughly, teasing and chaffing him, probably to try his temper. This continues till he presents his tormentors with new clothes. The bride is now introduce into the assembly, and the gifts prepared for her by her father-in-law, and the *var* presented. She is then taken by her friends to a Mahwa tree, which she must wed as the *var* wedded the mango, and she is brought back to the bower of Hymen in a basket. The *var* then applies the *sindur* to her forehead, making a red mark between the eyes, and the guests all shout "*haribol, sindradan*".

In some places, as in Singbhum, they touch and mark each other with blood as a sign that they have become one flesh, and this is probably the true origin of the singular but very universal custom of *sindradan*. They are now man and wife, and receive the congratulations of their friends, and next morning go home together on the *jahaz*, the bride sitting submissively at her husband's feet.

The presence of a Brahman is not necessary to give validity to a Kurmi marriage. They consult a Brahman astrologer as to whether the marriage is likely to prove happy [320] and fruitful, or otherwise, and he is sometimes asked to name a fortunate day, but his aid is not otherwise sought.

The Akhan Jatra : The Kurmis do not appear to have any anti-Hindu religious ceremonies, but one of their festivals, the Akhan Jatra, or cake festival, is noticeable. On the last day of the month of Pus (in the middle of January) when the granaries are full, the people make cakes in the shape of a double cone called *gargaria pitha*, put on their best attire and assemble on a green outside their village, and the young men and women form circles and dance and sing. This is followed by a joust of archery : a cock is thrown up in the air, and this is continued till one of the young men manages to shoot the bird with an arrow. The successful archer is then treated as the hero of the day.

Physical traits : The Kurmis are a brown to tawny colored people, of average height, well proportioned, rather lightly framed, and with a fair amount of good looks. They show well shaped heads and high features, less refined than Brahmans, less martial than Rajputs, of humbler mien even than the Goalas ; but except when they have obviously intermixed with aborigines, they are unquestionably Aryan in looks. Grey eyes and brownish hair are sometimes met with amongst them. The women have usually small and well-formed hands and feet.

The Koiris : In some districts the Koiris appear to be more numerous than the Kurmis. The distinction between them is, that the former are generally market gardeners as well as agriculturists. They rear vegetables, tobacco, opium, and other produce that requires more careful cultivation than the staple crops, but they are also good agriculturists as well as gardeners.

Buchanan estimated that there were 30,000 families of Koiris in the Shahabad District, and 45,000 families in Bihar. I have no means of estimating their number elsewhere. In Chutia Nagpur they bear no comparison to the Kurmis in numbers, and I imagine that this is the case in most districts of Bengal. It is perhaps the opium cultivation that has attracted so many of them to Bihar.

The Koiris are generally allowed to be 'Satsudras', pure Sudras. Their own tradition is, that they were produced specially by Mahadeo and Parbati for the gardens of the holy city of Benares.

The Sakiars are, I am told, a tribe of Koiris, not a distinct caste.

A learned pandit informs me that the derivation of the name is *Ku*, earth, and *Ari*, enemy. They are so called from their constant attacks on the soil. Koiris, men and women, are always troubling it.

They observe the 'Brahmanas' more strictly than most Sudras and inferior castes. Six months after birth the first food is given to a child by a Brahman from rice, *mahaprashad*, that has been offered to idols. At the age of five or six, boys and girls have their ears pierced by the *guru*, or priest, who is a Sanyasi Gosain, not a Brahman, and the *mantra* is at the same time given ; but as the child does not always recollect the mysterious words imparted to him, they are repeated to him when he grows older. No other ceremony occurs till marriage, which takes place when the boy is ten to twelve and the girl seven to ten.

The preliminaries are first arranged by mutual friends, who meet at the house of the bride. If they come to an agreement, small sums of money are interchanged. The **[321]** boy's friends give four annas and a half, and the girl's friends one and a half, and this is an engagement.

But as a betrothal it is incomplete till the ceremony called *sugan bandhna* is performed. Ten or more of the boy's friends with music and a Brahman go to the girl's house ; her friends are also invited and the ceremony commences by the father of the girl and the father of the boy each spreading a new cloth on the ground. The Brahman then takes some *dhan* from the store of the bride's father, and places it in the hands of the maiden who throws it on the cloth spread by her father-in-law that is to be. The Brahman next takes some grain that has been brought from the bridegroom's house, and this is thrown on the cloth spread by the father of the maiden. The clothes are then rolled up with the grain in them, the bride retains that which was brought from her betrothed's house. The friends of the latter take away the cloth produced by the bride's father.

Eight days after the above ceremony the marriage takes place. A Brahman priest presides, and the service is strictly Brahmanical. At the conclusion of the orthodox ritual the bride and *var*, their scarfs tied together, are made to perform seven times a circuit round a collection of vessels containing water, grain, oil, and a light. This is called the 'Bhanwar'. The girl goes first, she carries one of the cloths with grain and the boy the other, and allowing the grain to drop they thus mark the circuits they make.

When all is over, the boy is taken into the women's apartments and invited to eat, but he will not touch food till a present is made to him. In the same manner when the bride first appears amongst the females of her husband's house, she obstinately declines all refreshments till bribed to eat. The *jahaz* is used by the Koiris as well as by the Kurmis.

Widows may marry again, but for such a union the full marriage ceremony is not needed ; an interchange of gifts and the presentation of the *sindur* is all that is requisite. This is called *Sagoi*. The offspring of such a marriage are considered legitimate. It is usual for a younger brother to take his elder brother's widow unless she objects.

The 'Gram Deotas,' village gods, of the Koiris, at least of those that I have met with, are 'Sukha', 'Parameswari' and 'Mahavira, Hanuman'. Altars to these three are in each house, one altar to all three and a plant of *tulsi* in the courtyard.

They keep the Hindu festivals of 'Janmoshtomi' and the 'Sivarat,' and like many other Hindus settled in Chutia Nagpur, the Pagan festival of 'Karma', and every three years they make offerings on a hill known as the Marang Buru of the Kols, the god that is invoked by the aborigines, especially when rain does not fall in due season.

The Kolitas.

In my account of the people of the valley of the Brahmaputra, I have noticed the Kolitas as the remnant of the earliest Aryan colonists of Asam. They were an important section of the population of the ancient Kamarupa, including Rangpur in older times, and are now looked on as the purest of the old Hindu people in Asam. I had met with them in no other place till I visited the Tributary Mahals of the South-Western Frontier, and from what I saw of them there, I am inclined to class them as a purely agricultural tribe connected with the Kurmis.

[322] They form a considerable portion of the agricultural population of Sambalpur, and appear in Bonai as the best cultivators and most substantial people there.

I found them occupying villages together with Gonds, and Kandhs ; but these, the probable representatives of the aborigines of the place, had nearly all fallen into the position of farm servants to the Kolitas who had large substantial well stocked farm yards and very comfortable houses. I was freely admitted into their domiciles, and the women and children all presented to me. They afterwards came to my tent and sat there. The *pardah*[15] system was entirely unknown to them.

The old men told me that the Kolitas came originally from Mithila in the days of Rama, and it is to that deified hero that they chiefly pay their devotions. There was a temple to Radha Krishna in the middle of one of the villages, but this had been put up for them by the Raja, and though they worshipped there also at his request, they did not neglect their favorite Rama.

Physical traits : Though doubtless best part Aryan in blood, there is, I think, a slight deterioration arising from admixture with the less comely aborigines. Their color varies from coffee to tawny yellow, or from 43 to 45 of the table published in the *Memoires de la Societe d'anthropologie.* The mouths are well formed, though large ; eyes generally large, full and clear, many hazel. I especially observed that many of the fair sex were distinguished by well-marked eyebrows and long eyelashes. The noses are not aquiline or prominent, but there is no remarkable deficiency of nasal bone, though the feature is often inclined towards the pug species. They have straight foreheads, but a want of breadth across the temples which takes from the oval of the face. The men show moustache and beard, but little whisker. They are well proportioned and about the average height of Hindus of the lower provinces.

The Kolitas generally allow their girls to grow to maturity before they give them away in marriage. I saw many full grown spinsters in the villages that I visited.

A very large proportion of the agricultural class of the Katak Tributary Estates are Kolitas. They are generally called there 'Tasa', for 'Chasa', but if you ask them to define their *caste* less vaguely, they will tell you they are 'Kolita Tasa', or 'Or Tasa', and the 'Kolita Tasa' are, I understand, most numerous. The Or Tasa are a different caste, but there appears to be very little real difference between them and the Kolitas ; they are all considered to be Sat Sudra.

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[15] Practice of secluding females.

The Aghareahs

The Aghareahs, a small but very thriving tribe of Hindu cultivators in the Tributary Mahals, may be noticed amongst the agricultural classes. According to their tradition they are called Aghareahs from having come from Agra. They were there, they say, Kshatriyas, but having been subjected to some persecution by the ruler of the State they left it, and taking up new lands in a new country cast aside their sacred thread, the badge of the twice-born, with all its privileges, and obligations, and took to the plough.

Their appearance favors their pretensions to be of good blood. Tall, well made, with high Aryan features and tawny complexion, they look like Rajputs, but are more industrious and intelligent than the generality of the fighting tribe.

[323] The women are spared from all out-door labour, but are not secluded, and have their own share of industrial avocations as well as household duties. They spin their own cotton and give the yarn to the weavers, who return it to them in piece goods. They are all decently, and even handsomely clothed, and have a good store of silver ornaments. The girls are betrothed at a very early age, but remain in their fathers' houses till they grow up into women, so one of the evils of early marriage is avoided. I made enquiries amongst a number of young girls, and found that all above seven years old were betrothed and wore the silver ornaments which had been given to them when they became engaged.

At the marriage a Brahman priest officiates, but it must be a Brahman from the North-Western Provinces. They do not employ the Utkala Brahmans. They have only one for a large tract of country, he goes his rounds and marries them all off periodically. They are orthodox Hindus in most customs, but they allow widows to remarry, and they bury the dead, but at any time when the bones are dry, the principal joints and part of the skull are taken up and conveyed by the representative of the deceased to the Ganges. This service is often neglected. My informant told me that his father, grandfather, and great-grandfather's bones were all in the ground and on his conscience. The bones taken are called 'Ashta', 'Ashtang', as representing the eight parts of man. The young girls, though betrothed, appear to enjoy great liberty. Some of them are very pretty, bright-looking creatures of reddish light-brown complexion ; fine glossy long black hair ; very bright eyes, remarkable for the clearness of the conjunctive membrane ; slight flexible graceful figures ; teeth white and regular, faces not disfigured by paint, and no *godna*, or marks of tattooing, except on hands and legs. The hair is very neatly and elaborately dressed, secured by a large silver ornament. I have seen among them many pairs of grey eyes, and long eye-lashes are a prevailing feature.

It is reported in Gangpur, where there are some three or four thousand Aghareahs, that the beauties I have been describing and all Aghareah females are witches. There is among all classes in Gangpur a wide-spread and deep-rooted belief in witchcraft. It is equally dreaded by the wildest and by the most civilized of the people, and I have had before me proceedings in several cases in which it appeared that Aghareah women had been badly treated to drive the spirit out of them or make them give up the black art. I have been told that in Gangpur there are old women, professors of witchcraft, who stealthily instruct the young girls. The latter are all eager to be taught and are not considered proficient till a fine forest tree selected to be experimented on is destroyed by the potency of their *mantras*, or charms, so that the wife a man takes to his bosom has probably done her tree and is confident in the belief that she can, if she pleases, dispose of her husband in the same manner, if he makes himself obnoxious.

Trading Classes, Artizans, Mixed and Impure Tribes

I am reminded that I have already exceeded the allotted space, and I must bring this work to a close with a very brief notice of some remaining sections of the population of Bengal.

Trades—Amongst the Hindus, all trades are hereditary, and each forms a caste, the persons belonging to which must not marry out of it. These guilds are not included [324] amongst the four classes by the ancient exponents of the Hindu system. They are absurdly declared to be the issue of marriages between a male of one or other of the recognised castes with a female of another, and are thence called the Mixed Classes, of whom from thirty to forty are enumerated, including the tribes to whom the vilest offices are assigned.

Some trades are deemed honorable, and those who follow them are placed at least on a footing of equality with members of the fourth or Sudra class ; others are dishonorable, and cause the degradation of the fraternity who practise them. Dr. Buchanan tells us that the following members of the trading classes rank as Sudras in the Patna division :—

Sang tarash	....	Stone cutters and masons
Thathera	....	Workers in bell-metal
Kansara	....	Ditto and braziers
Tambuli	....	Sellers of betel (piper)
Malis	....	Gardeners
Barai	....	Cultivators of betel
Kandu	....	House-builders (Women parch grain)

The blacksmiths, are pure in Bengal, but not in Bihar. The Nai or Napits, barbers, are pure in Bengal, impure in Bihar. In some places they have certain priestly functions assigned to them (originating probably in the importance attached to the operation of shaving on some occasions), and are respected accordingly.

It is not in all instances easy to explain why certain trades are regarded as degrading. The Barhais, carpenters, are considered impure—I know not why—and so are the indispensable Kumbhars, potters, because, it is said, they cut the throats of the vessels which they make when they remove them from the wheel. The Lakheri, or workers in lac are in the same class.

The following are included amongst the lowest class of Hindus ; none of the other castes would touch water drawn by them :—Binds, Chaing or Chain, fishermen, boatmen, and general laborers ; Kewots and Malers, fishermen only. A man may fish for sport without loss of dignity, and people of good caste may catch fish for their meals in baskets, traps, &c., but the man who makes it his profession, is a degraded creature. Jogis and Patwas, rearers of the silk-worm and weavers of the silk, are impure, though many of this class acquire wealth, and they are, on the whole, a well-favored people.

The weavers of cotton piece-goods are deemed vile, and in consequence I believe of the low position assigned to them by their co-religionists, great numbers embraced Islam and are now called Jolahas. The oil-pressers, Kulhus or Telis, though pushing a most lucrative trade and living well, are in the class I am describing ; so are the Pasis, whose chief duty is to express the juice of palm trees. Dabgars, who make the leathern vessels for holding *ghee*, and all other workers in leather, the Mochis in Bengal, the Chamars in Bihar, are *ex-officio* impure ; and truly the skinning of deceased cattle and seething the skins is not a sweet employment, but some years ago a reformer arose amongst this "worshipful company", who established a sect called Satiamas, led by a reformer who professed deism and inculcated cleanly habits and purity of life. Many thousands of Chamars were converted, and they are now described in the *Gazetteer of the Central Provinces* as "a regenerate people, frugal and temperate."

[325] We must discard as altogether absurd the Hindu notion of the trade and low menial classes having been deduced from an illicit commingling of the recognised castes ; but the absolute exclusion of persons so essentially necessary to society is an additional proof of the fallibility of the theory that the twice-born, meaning Brahmans, Kshatriyas and Vaisyas, were in themselves a complete nation. I have already shown that they could have had no ploughmen, and they surely could not have existed without manufactures of any kind of menials for the low offices ; for it must be remembered that they could not employ their own sanctified hands on works declared derogatory to their caste. It is clear that a large proportion of the existing trading classes always belonged to the Hindu Aryan nation ; but as some of them have the honor of being regarded as people from whose hands the twice-born condescend to take water, and others are so degraded that their touch is pollution, it appears to me probable that certain offices and trades were exclusively performed by slaves, and the Aryans introduced a very numerous body of these helot artificers and low menials into India.

Weavers : I have observed that weavers are conspicuous amongst the craftsmen thus degraded and still despised, and that many of them in consequence became Muhammadans. I think this also explains why we now find so many thousands of them in the special preserves of the aboriginal races. I have noticed in my account of the Hos of Singbhum, the Tantis, weavers of apparently Hindu origin, whom we find domesticated as essential constituents of every Ho village community. We have besides thousands of weavers in the Pans or Panwas, Gandas, Chiks of the Southern Tributary Estate, and the Pabs and Panikas of the western districts. In feature these people are Aryan or Hindu rather than Kolarian or Dravidian. Their habits are all much alike, repudiating the Hindu restrictions on food, but worshipping Hindu gods and goddesses, and having no peculiar customs which stamp them as of the other races. This helot weaver caste, if I am right in thus characterising them, cannot number less than 50,000 in the province of Chutia Nagpur.

Ghasis : But far viler than the weavers are the extraordinary tribe called Ghasis, foul parasites of the Central Indian hill tribes, and submitting to be degraded even by them. If the Chandalas of the *Purans*, though descended from the union of a Brahmani and a Sudra, are the "lowest of the low," the Ghasis are Chandalas, and the people, who further south are called Pariahs, are no doubt of the same distinguished lineage. If, as I surmise, they were Aryan helots, their offices in the household or communities must have been of the lowest and most degrading kinds. It is to be observed that the institution of caste necessitated the organisation of a class to whom such offices could be assigned, and when formed, stringent measures would be requisite to keep the servitors in their position. We might thence expect that they would avail themselves of every opportunity to escape, and no safer asylums could be found than the retreats of the forest tribes. Wherever there are Kols, there are Ghasis, and though evidently of an entirely different origin, they have been so long associated that they are a recognised class in the Kol tradition of creation, which appropriately assigns to them a thriftless career, and describes them as living on the leavings or charity of the more industrious members of society. There are not fewer than 50,000 Ghasis in the Kol countries. Their favorite employment is no doubt that of musicians ; no ceremony can take place or great man move without the accompaniment **[326]** of their discordant instruments, drums, kettle-drums, half-drums, and huge horns, to proclaim the event in a manner most horrifying to civilised ears.

Doms : The habits of the widely-spread Dom class are as impure as those of the Ghasis, and they get their living much in the same fashion ; they are to be found in all parts of Bengal and Northern India, living on the outskirts of villages. They are seldom seen working in the fields ; they are employed to kill dogs and remove dead bodies, and sometimes as executioners, and when they have none of these congenial tasks to perform, they make baskets.

Dosads : The Dosads or Doshads are another type of a low-caste tribe, living freely and according to Hindu notions, impurely, but apparently rather of Aryan than Turanian origin. The men, who are of strong build and as tall as the average Hindu, have coarse features, but with nothing of the Chinese or Negro about them. They have adopted the worship of the demon Rahu, who is supposed to cause eclipses by his periodical attacks on the sun and moon in revenge for having had his head cut off by Vishnu. The Dosads not only adore him, but claim to be his descendants, their upper class from Rahu and his wife, and their second class from Rahu and his wife's *femme de chambre*. Their mode of worshipping their founder is as demoniacal as he could wish. The faithful ascend ladders formed of sword blades, so placed as to bring the sharp edge in contact with the sole of each foot, pressing as it ascends, and they afterwards walk through a ditch filled with blazing faggots on which oil or *ghee* is poured to intensify the heat, with no more injury than was sustained by Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the fiery furnace. The Dosads aspire to higher employment than the Ghasis and Doms. They serve as village watchmen and sometimes as Police and as Court runners. They too started a reformer some three or four years ago ; but after a year's trial of abstinence, they came to the conclusion that it did not suit them and relapsed.

Bedyas : The wandering gipsy-like tribe of Bedyas are found in most Bengal Districts, and so indifferent is their character that they are usually placed under the special surveillance of the Police. They are a branch of the Bazigar or Nat family, a good account of whom is to be found in Vol. VII of the *Asiatic Society's Researches*, page 458. They are jugglers, fortune-tellers, rope-dancers, beggars, wanderers, and bird-killers, and their pursuits are further indicated by their having a slang, or rogue's language, only understood by themselves. They submit to circumcision and call themselves Muhammadans, but they have many Hindu customs and idolatrous practices, and consult Brahmans on particular occasions. Though scattered and nomadic, they are organised as communities and have "head centres" in different localities. They sometimes call themselves Manjhi and Mahali.

Rajwars : Having no space left, I must spare my readers a long account of the mongrel tribes. I think we may reckon amongst them the Rajwars, a tribe well known in the Gya and adjoining districts as troublesome characters, especially addicted to highway robbery. Dr. Buchanan was disposed to class them amongst the aboriginal races, chiefly in consequence of their impure practices. Traditionally they appear to connect themselves with the Bhuiyas, but this is only in Bihar. The Rajwars in Sirguja and the adjoining estates are peaceably-disposed cultivators, who declare themselves to be fallen Kshatriyas ; they do not, however, conform to Hindu [327] customs, and they are skilled in a dance called *chailo*, which I believe to be of Dravidian origin. The Rajwars of Bengal admit they are derived from the misce-genation of Kurmis and Kols. They are looked upon as very impure by Hindus, who will not take water from their hands.

Baoris and Bagdis : The Baoris and Bagdis are, I conceive, the remnant of an aboriginal race who by inter-marriage with low-caste Hindus have nearly effaced their primitive lineaments. The Bagdis are now employed as fishermen, *palki*-bearers, and general laborers, but some holders of large estates in Eastern Bengal are of this family. I consider that the fact of Baoris being still in possession of Ghatwali tenures as ancestral, shows that they had once a proprietary interest in the soil. Babu Rakhal Das Haldar suggests that the name is derived from the Sanskrit *varvar*, barbarian, the root of the Asam Abor ; but in Asam the word opposed to Abor, which is applied only to independent tribes, is Bori, which means dependent or subjugated, and that seems in every way more appropriate to the condition of the Baori, who appear to have meekly accepted their burden-bearing lot, both men and women hiring themselves out as day-laborers or accompanying travellers on journeys. The men carry *palkis*.

The Baoris have some singular customs. They are excluded from caste if they kill a heron or a dog. In regard to the heron, it is the emblem of the tribe, and its flesh they must not eat ; but in regard to dogs, I was gravely informed by some of their elders that as they killed and ate cows and most other animals, they deemed it right to fix on some beast which should be as sacred to them as the cow to the Brahman, and they selected the dog because it was a useful animal while alive and not very nice to eat when dead,—a neat reconciliation of the twinges of conscience and cravings of appetite.

COLONEL DALTON AND THE RISE OF ANTHROPOLOGICAL SCIENCE IN INDIA

K. P. CHATTOPADHYAYA

Social necessity, in the sense of socio-political, socio-economic and socio-religious needs, give direction to activities of scientists in advanced societies, even as the compelling drive of hunger led the magician in early food-collecting as well as food-growing cultures to try to help in getting more food by, what he considered, were effective ways of ensuring it. In the later culture of settled and irrigated cultivation, the measurement of land on which food was grown, became of importance to ascertain exactly how much tax, in grain, should be realised from each plot for helping in maintenance of irrigation and to secure the boundaries of such different plots of land. At the same time, certain creative impulses were allowed scope in these cultures to the men with sensitive brains that we term genius. In the old stone age, the artist drew pictures of animals for magically helping in food supply, but creating at the same time works of art in the process although this was not essential for the correct magic. In a meeting place of cultures of Asia Minor, of Egypt and of Greece, the empirical rules for measurement of surfaces were analysed and systematised by Euclid, fulfilling a cultural need and at the same time pouring out his creative impulse through this outlet. In modern times, directive to scientific research, and development of even new sciences, have come unwittingly in the earlier period, and consciously of late from the compulsion of cultural need.

Until the sixteenth century, people of Western Europe were engaged in their local wars and attempts to build up or destroy their empires through such means. In the next century however they had begun to spread out and conquer dominions in other continents. At first they occupied thinly populated areas with people of less advanced culture. But later some of the areas brought under subjection were of people of ancient and living civilizations, where more primitive folk also lived side by side with the others.

The problem of administration of the various kinds of people with different beliefs and different material cultures made it necessary for the ruling group to get some idea of these details about the subject population. In some areas it were the military officers who were administrators. In other areas, civilian administrators were appointed. In the interest of their work these persons had to collect some information about the people in their charge. Also they were expected to report on natural resources which would be of economic benefit to their Government. Sometimes systematic investigations were arranged with these ends in view. The enquiries of Francis Buchanan Hamilton in India early in the nineteenth century were organised in this fashion. There were however others in India who realised the need of collecting data about the way of life of the people. The Asiatic Society was born out of the impulse to know more about the country, its people, their culture, and literary and archaeological remains, as also the fauna and flora of the land and its natural resources. Many interesting reports were published on all these topics in the journal of the society. One of the prolific and early contributors was Brian Houghton Hodgson, for many years political officer in Nepal. Another contributor, less prolific, but not less important in the field of Anthropology was Edward Tuite Dalton.

Born in 1815, Dalton entered the army in 1835 and almost immediately afterward participated in military expeditions against tribal folk in what is now the North Eastern Frontier Agency His experiences as a military officer visiting these areas and observing the people thereof, are to be found in his earlier articles to the Asiatic Society. The Miris (Meris according to his spelling), the Abors and also the Bhutias of Devanagiri figure in these articles. Careful details of time taken on journeys are given and also a map of hills of the Subarnasiri river area. In 1849 he was already a Captain and posted at Gauhati, where he reports the occurrence of an earthquake which cracked the walls of his bungalow (1849). While at Gauhati, he seems to have studied the organisation of the Mahapurushiya sect. As Political Assistant Commissioner, he seems to have considered a detailed knowledge of this widespread organisation of importance (1851). At the same time his enquiring mind led him to ascertain details of scientific but not of administrative interest. His article on temple remains of Assam was definitely the result of his scientific interest (1855). Interest in local resources of the area is also apparent in some of the other papers.

His success as a military officer and administrator of tribal areas seems to have led to his transfer to Chota Nagpur where he campaigned against hostile tribes, and also studied their customs and manners, later, at leisure. His report on a tour in the Tributary Mahals under him as Commissioner of Chota Nagpore (and Lt. Colonel in the army) is on the lines of his earlier reports. The resources of the area as well as the population and their way of life are noted. His paper entitled *The Kols of Chutia Nagpur* is a more ambitious and scientific contribution. Dalton gives a good account of the political structure of the villages and *parhas*, and also of the customs of birth, marriage and death, as also of divination for disease (1866). A brief vocabulary of Munda language was also included. These two papers were published in an extra number of the Asiatic Society. This number included a contribution entitled *Ethnology of India* by Justice Campbell, who in a postcript to his paper furnishes an introduction to Dalton's paper. The comments of Campbell are illuminating. He states about the Kols that Dalton "tells us that notwithstanding their tendency to drink, they increase rapidly. He evidently holds a most favourable view of them and I think it impossible to doubt that we have in these tribes, in a healthy and accessible country in the immediate vicinity of the capital of India, a people whom it behoves us to cherish and utilise........to make such a people thoroughly our own—to render the central and healthy plateau occupied by them, a completely Christian and Anglicised country would be (higher considerations apart) a very great source of strength and comfort to the English in India." It is worthwhile noting that another outstanding contributor to biological and anthropological science, B. H. Hodgson, already mentioned, recommended settling of Irish and Scotch farmers in Nepal with the same object in view. As an army officer, Dalton did not mention political objectives in his articles. His writings tended, in fact, to be more and more on scientific lines. His article on *Rude stone monuments in Chutia Nagpur and other places* published in 1873, when he was a full colonel, includes an interesting attempt to estimate the age of such monuments in Saranda Pir by their number in relation to the population at that time and their death rate. He is careful to point out how different assumptions about the nature of the units buried under these stones—whether an individual or a family—gives widely different ages. It is an admirable illustration of the application of the then newly developed statistical technique, used with a proper degree of caution. Dalton's major contribution to anthropology for which he is remembered, is his work *The Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal*, published in 1871. It gives a lucid, accurate, and at the same time vivid picture of the lives of the tribes of Assam and Chota Nagpur with whom he had had personal contact. He has also included reports of others, about tribes he did not know so well. These are somewhat meagre in their details. The publication is however of importance even now as showing a picture of how some of the more important of these tribes lived a hundred years ago.

Dalton's work was of a pioneer. But there were others working in the same field. A medical officer Dr. James Wise prepared and printed for private circulation an account of customs of various castes of Bengal, later incorporated by Risley in his much bigger work, *Tribes and Castes of Bengal*. Ibbettson in the Punjab, Risley in Bengal and Crooke in the United Provinces (now Uttar Pradesh) wrote accounts of manners and customs of tribes and castes of these areas. In 1901 Risley as Census Commissioner published the general results of investigations so far made, naturally emphasising his own views. In 1905, as Director of the Ethnographic Survey, instituted a little earlier, he directed and encouraged similar publications in other provinces. Seven volumes on South India (excluding Maharashtra proper) were published by E. Thurston and T. Rangachari. For Central Provinces (now split up) Hiralal and Russell published four volumes on Tribes and Castes of that area. Similar work was done in the Punjab and North West Frontier Province by Rose, and Enthoven in Bombay. The State of Cochin also took up this work and Rao Bahadur L.K.Ananth Krishna Iyer published his monumental work on Cochin Tribes and Castes. Nanjunadayya started similar work in Mysore ; but due to his death it was left incomplete. Much later, towards the close of his life, L.K.A.Iyer completed this work with accounts of the remaining Mysore Tribes and Castes. Non-official investigators were necessarily rare, because of difficulties of such work for them, also because, the science of anthropology had slowly developed under a cultural necessity felt so far by the foreign administrators. As Crooke remarked about these publications, the treatises had been compiled "as indispensable aids to civil administrators". A good deal of useful anthropological data is however to be found in them. Monographs were needed for more scientific presentation of data. A number of these were with this end in view prepared under direction of the Assam Government by their European officers.

The rising tide of national feeling since the closing years of the nineteenth century was however impelling the intellectuals and welfare workers in the country to pay attention to the condition of the peasantry and of other lowly people. In Chota Nagpur a young lawyer Sarat Chandra Roy working among Mundas, felt impelled to safeguard the interests and rights of these tribals. They were neglected by local officials and in consequence were losing their land to non-tribals. Roy studied the Munda language and published a monograph entitled *The Mundas and their Country*. It was recognised by the High Court of Judicature as authoritative. His more mature works on *The Oraons of Chota Nagpur*, *The Oraon Religion and Customs*, *The Birhors* and other works were published during next two decades. With the encouragement of Sir Edward Gait, who granted some financial assistance, Roy brought out in 1921 his journal *Man in India*, which was soon internationally accepted as a leading quarterly devoted to Anthropological studies. A year earlier a full-fledged department of Anthropology, teaching the subject in all its branches, had been opened by the University of Calcutta at the instance of Sir Asutosh Mukherjee. There is no need to discuss the direct or indirect impact of this organisation on development of Anthropology in India.

No attempt has been made in this note to appraise the work done in Physical Anthropology in India upto 1921, as Dalton was not a serious contributor to this branch of science.

LIONEL DAVID BARNETT

(1871-1960)

S. K. De

Dr. L. D. Barnett was a little over eighty-eight when he passed away early this year on January 28, 1960. With his demise Oriental scholarship lost one of its most eminent interpreters, and the line of distinguished Western Indologists of the past generation may be said to have come to an end.

Lionel David Barnett was born at Liverpool on October 21,1871. He had his early education at Liverpool Institute and University College, Liverpool. Admitted Sizar at Trinity College, Cambridge, on October 7, 1892, he became scholar of Trinity in 1893. He won Sir William Browne's Medal for Greek Ode and Greek Epigram in 1893, 1894 and 1896. He took First Class in Classical Tripos, both in Part I in 1894 and Part II in 1896 (with special distinction in Language), and obtained the Chancellor's Medal. He became Craven Scholar in 1894 and Craven Student in 1897 ; M. A. in 1899.

Thus, Barnett's education and early training was in classical language and literature, but by 1900 he was already proficient in German and French. From 1900 to 1904 we find him writing for the Temple Primers Series a work on Greek Drama (1900), and translating from German the Greek History of Heinrich Swoboda (1900), Roman History of Julius Koch (1900), Greek and Roman Mythology of H. Steuding (1901), Greek Antiquities of Richard Maisch (1903) and Roman Literature of Hermann Joachim (1904). Jointly with Herbert A. Strong he compiled a Historical Reader of Early French. Barnett's competence also in Spanish and Portuguese is evidenced by his translation (1931) of *El Libro de los Acuerdos* and his edition (1940) of Bevis Marks records, both published by the Oxford University Press.

At Cambridge Barnett appears to have become a disciple of Edward Byles Cowell, whom he mentioned later in 1905 as "the departed teacher and friend, the *halyāna-mitra* through life and beyond". It was probably Cowell's influence which turned his interest to Oriental language and literature. In 1899 Barnett was appointed Assistant Keeper and in 1908 Keeper of the Department of Oriental Printed Books and MSS at the British Museum, in which congenial sphere he was destined to spend the remaining years of his active life. He became Litt.D. (Vict.) in 1900 ; Professor of Sanskrit in the University College, 1906-17 ; Lecturer in Sanskrit in the School of Oriental Studies, 1917-48, where he was also Lecturer in Ancient Indian History and Epigraphy, 1922-48, Librarian and Editor of the *Bulletin*, 1940-47. He was Vice-President of the Royal Asiatic Society since 1934 and its Honorary Librarian since 1939. He became a fellow of the British Academy in 1936 and Companion of the Bath in 1937. After retirement he was persuaded in 1947 to come back to his Department in the British Museum where he continued to work. Just about the time of his demise the Asiatic Society of Bengal, the oldest institution of its kind, awarded to him Sir William Jones Medal for distinguished contribution to Indological studies.

The task of cataloguing Oriental Books and MSS made Barnett acquire many languages and scripts of India, and the great series of Catalogues prepared by him bear witness to his mastery of them. Besides two Supplementary Catalogues of Sanskrit, Pali and Prakrit Books acquired during 1892-1906 and 1906-1928 (published respectively in 1908 and 1928), we have from him Catalogues of Tamil Books (1909 and 1931), of Kannada, Badaga and Kurg Books (1910), Telugu Books (1912)and Burmese Books (1913). The Tibetan MSS in the Stein Collection are noticed by him in *JRAS* 1903, while th Tibetan MSS from Ancient Khotan were edited jointly by him and A. H. Francke (Vol i, Oxford 1907). Barnett deciphered also some South Indian inscriptions and published them in the Hyderabad Archaeological Series ; but he never seriously devoted himself to Epigraphic studies.

Barnett will be remembered also for his English translation of some important Hindu, Buddhist and Jaina religious works. Of these his translation of the *Bhagavad-gītā* appears to have been the earliest (Temple Classics 1905). After a general survey of the different currents of Indian philosophical thought, the fairly extensive and well-written introduction to this work proceeds to deal with the cult of Vāsudeva-Krishna, and gives a brief but interesting analysis of the Vyūha-doctrine. The translation of the text is bold and 'independent' ; but Barnett believes that in this document mainly of the Vāsudevic cult the different streams of tradition became confused in the mind of the author. It seems that Barnett misses the essential significance of the poem as the vital expression of a particular trend of religious thought ; and as it is, in his opinion, an ill-assorted cabinet of primitive philosophical ideas, he denies to it the rank of a great classic. Accordingly he concludes : "Its thought is confused, its utterance loose and rambling. The learning that it parades is shallow and ill-assorted. Neither does its style call for praise ; it shambles through the long reaches of monotonous *anushṭubh* metre in the clumsy manner of the old Epic—wordy, prosaic, and jejune." It is obvious that this strong and strange denunciation is prejudiced.

Less prejudiced and more interesting is Barnett's translation (abridged) of the *Bodhicaryāvatāra* of Shāntideva (Wisdom of the East Series 1909 ; 2nd ed. 1947), a manual of Mahāyāna Buddhism, and of the Prakrit *Antagada-dasāo* and *Anuttarovavāyia-dasāo* which constitute the 8th and the 9th Anga of the Jaina canon, (Orient. Trs. Fund 1907). Barnett showed his interest in Kashmir Shaivaism by his edition of the text of Abhinavagupta's *Paramārtha-sāra* with English translation in *JRAS*, 1910, which was followed up by some separate articles on the work and on Saiva Sidhdānta in general. His *Lallā-vākyāni* (Asiatic Soc. Monographs xvii, 1920), undertaken jointly with Sir George Grierson, gives an English version, with notes and glossary, of the wise sayings of Lal Dēd a mystic poetess of ancient Kashmir. About this time Barnett became interested in the Bhāsa-dramas published from Trivandrum between 1912 and 1915, and started a controversy about their authorship by giving expression to his doubt in a series of articles in *JRAS* (1919, The Plays ascribed to Bhāsa and the Matta-vilāsa ; 1921 'Bhāsa' ; 1925 'Who is the author of Svapna-vāsavadatta') and in *BSOS* (1920 'Matta-vilāsa and Bhāsa' ; 1924 'Ābhāsa-Bhāsa' ; 1930 Eng. trs. of Matta-vilāsa). The Controversy is now a matter of literary history.

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Barnett distinguished himself also as a prolific but careful reviewer. He reviewed more than 400 separate books regularly from 1924 to 1942 for the *JRAS* and the *BSOS*, the bibliography of which published in *BSOAS* xii (nos. 3 and 4) covers more than 18 pages. They illustrate the extraordinary range of his interest and width of scholarship.

All this Barnett achieved in the midst of his absorbing preoccupation at the British Museum. But in his long career of eminence in many fields of Oriental learning, Aryan (including Sinhalese), Dravidian, and Tibetan, one cannot say that he specialised in any particular sphere of study. He was a wonderful linguist but not a linguistician, and had a cultured mind interested in all forms of liberal study. Apart from the compilations and translations mentioned above, the few works of general interest that he wrote indicate that he was not a narrow specialist, and what particularly attracted him was the study of Indian culture and the Indian mind through its literature and philosophy. His *Hinduism* (Religions Ancient and Modern 1906) gives a lucid account of an indefinite and therefore difficult subject. In the Wisdom of the East Series were published his *Brahma-knowledge* (1907) which gives (in his own words) "an outline of the philosophy of the Vedānta as set forth by the Upanishads and by Shankara"; his *Heart of India* (1908) which consists of "sketches in the history of Hindu religion and morals"; his *Hindu Gods and Heroes* (1922) which propounds his general view that "the religion of the Aryans of India was essentially a worship of spirits – sometimes spirits of real persons, sometimes imaginary spirits—and that, although in early days it provisionally found room for personifications of natural forces, it could not digest them into Great Gods, and therefore they have either disappeared or, if surviving, remain as mere Struldbrugs." In the Handbooks to Ancient Civilisation Series was published his *Antiquities of India* (1913) which gives a general but useful account of the history and culture of Ancient India; but as it was written much before the discoveries made at Harappa (1920-24) and Mahenjo-daro (1922-29), the treatment is necessarily incomplete. All these works are convenient manuals meant for the cultured lay public, but they happily combine lucidity and succintness of expression with depth and accuracy of scholarship. To this list should be added Barnett's contributions to the Cambridge History of India, vol. i (1922), which deal respectively with the early history of Southern India (ch.xxiv) and the early history of Ceylon (ch.xxv).

The vol. xii (nos. 3 and 4) of the *Bulletin of School of Oriental and African Studies*, of which Barnett was the Editor from 1940 to 1947, was presented to him by his past and present colleagues not only as a tribute to his great learning but also as "an expression of personal affection inspired by the modesty with which that learning has been borne and the never-failing helpfulness not only to scholars but to the public at large in which it found expression." Indeed, this innate modesty, which was a natural concomitant of true learning but which delusively cloaked his beneficient scholarship, never failed to impress those who came in close contact with him; and it has been rightly emphasised in the dedicatory words of the presentation volume which we have quoted above.

Like Max Muller, Barnett could never be persuaded to visit India, but he never had a glorified picture in his mind through the enchantment of distance and halo of past tradition. He had nevertheless a genuine affection for India and for those Indians who were his pupils at London. The great gifts he brought to Oriental scholarship and the unremitting labour he devoted to its cause brought his name to the forefront of Western Indologists, and his passing away even at a ripe old age is certainly a great loss. But it will also be felt as a personal loss by a large circle of his pupils and friends in India, among whom the present writer has the privilege of counting himself as one.

1. 5. 1960

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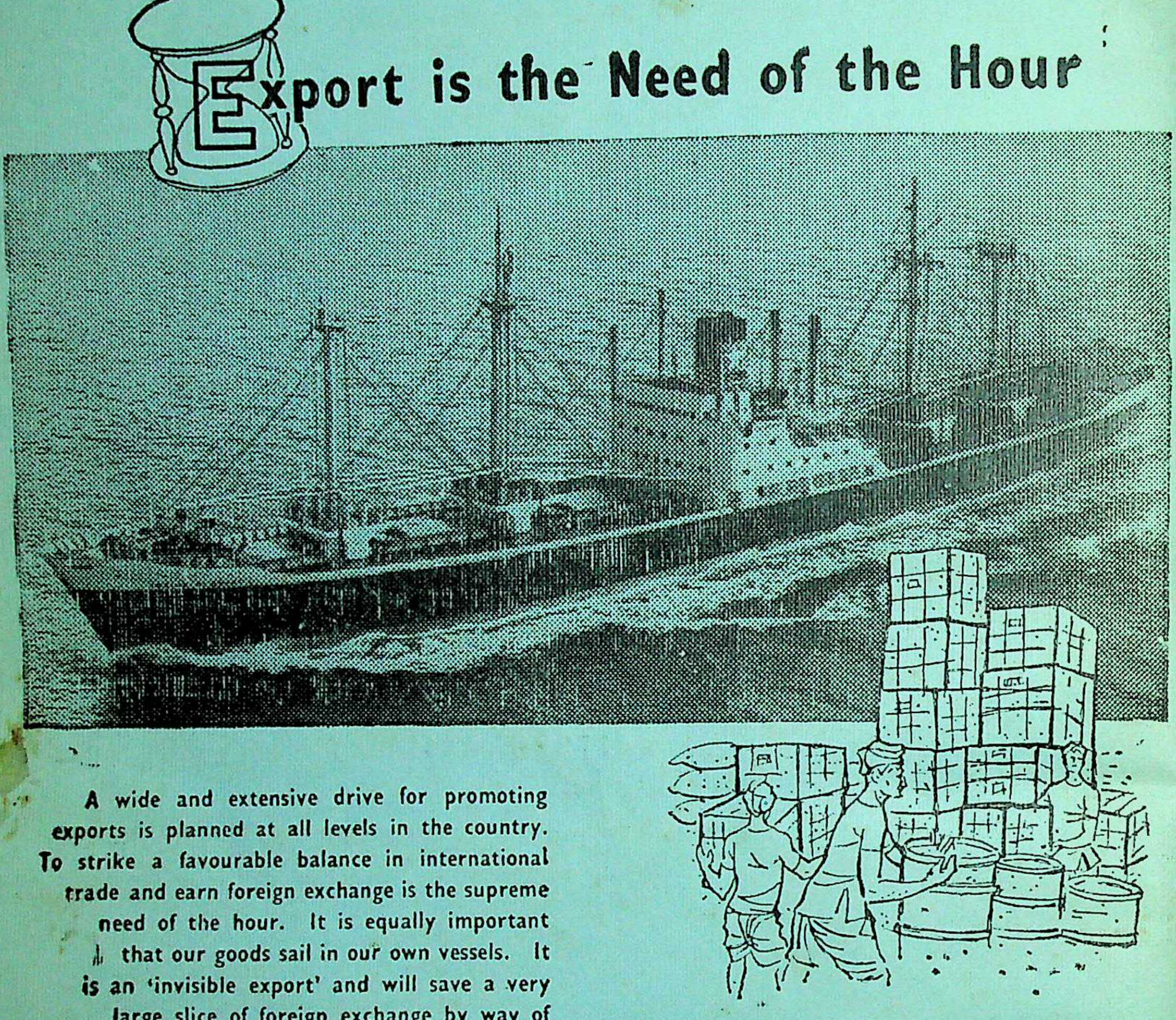

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